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LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION

BY

JAMES MACKINNON, Ph.D., D.D.
Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History, University of Edinburgh

VOL. IV.

VINDICATION OF THE MOVEMENT (1530-46)

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PREFACE

THIS volume reviews the history of Luther and the Reformation, as directed by him, from 1530 to 1546, the year of his death. This history constitutes the third act of the Reformation drama. Its dominant feature is the vindication of the movement in the face of the attempt of its opponents to repress it, and the efforts of the more radical wing of the reform party to influence its development, in opposition to Luther.

The attempt to repress it led to the formation of the Schmalkald League in its defence, and compelled the Emperor, Charles V., to adopt a temporising policy until, on the eve of Luther's death, the international situation at last furnished the opportunity to strike at its chief secular leaders, the Elector John Frederick and the Landgrave Philip. Their defeat did not, however, involve the suppression of the movement. The work of Luther substantially survived the imperial victory, which the revolt of the Elector Maurice and his Protestant confederates ere long nullified.

Equally ineffective were the efforts of the advanced wing of the Protestant party to influence the development of the movement in accordance with their radical tendency. These efforts led to a conservative reaction within the evangelical ranks and the consequent persecution and the virtual suppression of the sectarian development for the time being.

The part played by Luther in this twofold vindication is traced in the delineation of his attitude towards the imperial policy and the contentions of the sectaries, his later polemic against Rome, and his conflict with theological dissent within the evangelical party. The concluding chapters are devoted to a critical review and estimate of the Reformer and his work and influence.

During this later phase of his activity the belligerent spirit of the Reformer appears unabated. His irascibility, his violent intolerance, his unbending dogmatism increase, in fact, with the years, and find unstinted expression in his duels with his opponents within the evangelical Church as well as with the Romanists and the sects. He virtually becomes the infallible standard of the evangelical faith, and treats all dissidents, whether Sacramentarian, Sectarian, Romanist, or even professedly Lutheran, as inveterate and diabolic enemies of the truth. Zwinglians, Anabaptists, Spirituals, Antinomians, as well as Papalists, are pilloried and denounced with equal vehemence.

This side of the ageing Luther is very much in evidence in these declining years, on which the overstrain, the exacting and exhausting conflict of over thirty years have left their deep furrow. The psychological effects are only too visible in the clouding of his vision, the exacerbation of the less attractive features of the man and his personality. These features give scope enough for the critic as well as the apologist.

The writer has striven to hold the balance, and to stress the strong as well as the weak points in Luther's latter-day thought and activity. From the extensive concluding review readers may gauge for themselves the surpassing significance of this marvellous religious genius and leader. Impressions differ with different minds. At all events the writer, who has spent laborious years at close quarters with the man and his writings, has learned to appreciate and admire as well as criticise and animadvert.

From the historic point of view the test of the greatness of Luther is the vital force of the movement which, by the power of his dominating will and passionate personality, he initiated and led. What was great and good and fruitful in it has survived and developed in spite of a certain lack of vision and wisdom on his part as man and as leader. The vast religious and moral influence of the evangelical Churches throughout the world of to-day is the convincing demonstration of its vital force. Some of the things he magnified have dwindled into insignificance; the freer tendency which, in dereliction from his own fundamental principle of freedom, he refused to admit into the Reformation movement, has outlived persecution and grown into a goodly heritage of it; the broader unity of Protestantism, which he declined to own, has prevailed in the fellowship of the evangelical Churches of Europe, America, and the British Dominions. This fellowship received a striking exemplification when the representatives of these Churches met in Sept. 1929, on the occasion of the Quater-Centenary of the Marburg Conference, to honour Luther and Zwingli, and along with them the persecuted leaders of the Reformation sects, as alike fathers and brethren in a common, if many-sided cause. Equally impressive the testimony to the spirit of unity afforded by the great international Protestant assembly (the Stockholm Œcumenical Council), which convened at Eisenach and Erfurt in August to discuss the common interests of the evangelical Churches.

I take this opportunity of thanking the many generous critics from whom I have derived encouragement and edification in the course of this testing and toilsome task. Some of them have expressed regret that I have allotted too little space to Luther's collaborators, especially Melanchthon. Others would have preferred a larger incursion into the general history of the period. Perhaps I have been too sparing of such digressions. It would have been comparatively easy for one who has some claim to a special knowledge of the period to amplify these four volumes in the manner suggested. In this fourth volume, in particular, Melanchthon has had a fair share of attention, in virtue of his prominence as Luther's substitute in the leadership on certain critical occasions. In previous volumes his importance in relation to Luther has been at least generally indicated at the proper juncture. But my theme has been Luther, not Melanchthon or Bucer, etc., and the Reformation—Luther and his work as a Reformer. Further, to have strayed at every turn into the general history of the period would have been to attempt a superfluous and an impossible compilation. Given the theme, it was my business to stick to it, to refrain from overloading and overcrowding, to keep in the foreground the man and his work in the creation and leadership of the Reformation movement. There are plenty of competent books on Luther's collaborators and on the general history of the Reformation, and I fear that I should have spoiled my own if I had not assumed their existence and their accessibility to the inquiring reader. "It is a task by itself," says a recent writer, "to write a biography of Luther; a different task to set forth the history of the Reformation."[1]

My Roman Catholic critics—with a couple of notable exceptions—find little or no good in the work. They prefer the Luther of the traditional Romanist conception, and *ipso facto* assume that any other version of him must be false and partial. *Roma locuta, causa finita.* It is a strange mentality that assumes absolute finality of judgment in matters historical or even theological. It is no doubt very convenient and comforting thus to assume a monopoly of correct fact or belief, and indulge to one's own satisfaction in the dictatorial gesture, the magisterial mien at the bar of history. But history has a most unconscionable way of refusing to suit itself to the absolute system of the purely dogmatic type of mind, which presumes to set itself above the laws of critical historic inquiry and dictate instead of demonstrating its data. The day of the infallible dictator in things of the mind and the spirit has long passed, however much he may strive to prolong his existence in Italy and elsewhere.

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[1] Bauer, "Die Wittenberger Universitäts-Theologie," Preface (1928).

Popular Roman Catholic effusions on Luther and his work, assiduously circulated for propagandist purposes, are certainly not distinguished by the historically minded spirit. Of this popular stuff it may be said, as George Wishart remarked of the Bishop of Glasgow's sermon, "Let him alone, his sermon will not much hurt."[2] Even where Roman Catholic criticism of Luther and the Reformation rests on a more solid basis—and a number of Roman Catholic writers have made more or less substantial contributions to the history of the Reformation—it is too apt to be vitiated by the assumption that historic criticism and scientific method must be strictly subordinated to the conservation of Roman Catholic belief and practice.

I desire to express once more my obligations to Mr Frank C. Nicholson, M.A., Chief Librarian of Edinburgh University, and his staff, for service cordially rendered in the course of the composition of the work. To Dr Otto, Oberbibliothekar of the University of Bonn, one of my old *Almæ Matres*, and Dr Reinhold, Oberbibliothekar of the University of Marburg, I also owe much help in the use of the resources of these Libraries. My cordial acknowledgments are further due to the Carnegie Universities' Trust for the grant of a definite sum against loss in the publication of this volume. I am indebted to Mrs MacKinnon for reading the proofs of this and the previous volumes.

[2] Knox, "History of the Reformation," i. 127.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGES
THE EMPEROR AND THE PROTESTANTS - - 1-34

I. The Augsburg Confession - - - - 1-11

Luther's short-sighted opposition to the policy of Protestant Union—Emperor bent on restoring the unity of the Church—Necessity of cautious procedure—Charles's arrival at Augsburg and preliminary skirmish over the question of evangelical preaching—Melanchthon draws up the Augsburg Confession—His accommodating attitude at expense of Swiss theologians—A diplomatic document—Its merits—Luther approves original draft, but sceptical about result—His sojourn at Coburg.

II. The Rejection of the Confession - - - 11-21

Attitude of the Catholic majority—The Confutation—Emperor adopts it and demands its acceptance by the Protestant princes—Melanchthon's pliancy—Luther's intervention—Letters from Coburg—Their resolute tone—" Break off negotiations and rely on God "—Effect on the Elector John and the Protestant princes—Refusal to accept the Recess presented by the Emperor—Adherence to Apology for Confession—The Emperor and the Elector—Recalcitrant attitude of the cities—Close of the Diet and Edict against the Protestants.

III. The League of Schmalkald - - - - 22-34

Bucer and Luther agree to compromise on the Real Presence—Zwingli rejects it—Negotiations for a defensive Protestant alliance—The question of the right of resistance—The theory of the Saxon jurists—Formation of defensive league—Luther and the right of resistance—" Warning to his dear Germans "—A prophetic utterance—His deliverance in favour of resistance—Motives and importance of the League—Frustrates the policy of compulsion and secures an accommodation—Its more immediate effects—Its extension—Its international influence—Luther and the Nuncio Vergerio—The Schmalkald Articles—The Wittenberg Concord.

CHAPTER II

PAGES
THE LATER RELIGIOUS RADICALISM - - - 35-75

I. The Anabaptist Movement (1524-36) - - - 35-51

Adult baptism—Divergence from Luther—Narrow conception of the Church—Repudiation of State connection—Puritanism—Thoroughgoing Biblicism—Represents various degrees of radicalism—The question of its origin—Offshoot of the Reformation—The Zürich Anabaptists—Their persecution—Spread of the movement—Hubmaier—Denck—His distinctive spiritual teaching—His wanderings and death — Moderate Communism of the early Anabaptists—Hans Hut and the extreme section—Melchior Hoffmann—Repression of the movement—Anabaptist martyrs.

II. The Münster Madness - - - - - 51-57

Fanaticism fanned by persecution—Matthys and Bockelson—Anabaptist régime at Münster—The new Israel under Bockelson—Sufferings of the besieged and capture of the city—Universal repression—The better side of the movement reflected in Protest of Moravian Anabaptists—Purification and future of the movement—Lack of insight and intolerance of Reformers.

III. Luther and the Anabaptists - - - - 57-75

His missive "Concerning Anabaptism"—How he controverts their contentions—Efficacy of baptism does not depend on faith of baptized person—Profession of faith not sufficient guarantee of its possession—Defence of infant baptism—Magnifying of baptism a relapse into the religion of works—Disapproves of brutal repression—Erelong urges the use of the sword against them—Preface to the work of Menius against them—"Concerning the Sneaks and Hedge-Preachers"—Criticism of its standpoint—Advises the infliction of death penalty—Melanchthon's attitude—His examination of Anabaptist prisoners—Their defence of their opinions—Melanchthon's judgment and execution of prisoners—The Landgrave's query and the deliverance of the Wittenberg Theological Faculty thereon—Sedition and blasphemy—Luther supports deliverance, whilst leaving room for exercise of clemency.

CHAPTER III

ECCLESIASTICAL AND EDUCATIONAL - - 76-108

I. Organisation and Discipline - - - 76-94

Luther and the relation of Church and State—His harassing task as leader of evangelical movement—The Zwickau episode and the defence of ministerial rights—The Electors John and John Frederick and the questions of organisation and the reform of the religious life—Luther on the disposal of ecclesiastical revenue—New visitation of electoral territories—Ecclesiastical constitution for Wittenberg—The problem of ecclesiastical

PAGES

discipline—Excommunication—Difficulty of its application—The controversy at Nürnberg—Luther's lack of organising initiative—Views on the subject—Consistorial courts and their jurisdiction — The Wittenberg "Constitution" — Luther's opposition to legal regulation of the religious life—The question of ministerial ordination—Luther's Formulary.

II. EDUCATION AND CULTURE - - - - - 95-108

Luther's continued enlightened interest in education—His preface to Menius's "Christian Economy"—"Sermon on the Duty of Keeping Children at School"—The materialism of the age—Education indispensable (*a*) for the proper discharge of the ministerial function, (*b*) the proper maintenance of civil government—Luther the Father of the modern Labour Government—The high function of the schoolmaster—Value of history and historical instruction—His edition of the Fables of Æsop—His evaluation of Music and his musical compositions—Evaluation of the Classics—His later attitude to Erasmus and renewal of controversy—Reform of University education and revival of the Disputation.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMPEROR AND THE REFORMATION (1539-46) 109-126

I. THE POLICY OF CONCILIATION - - - 109-119

The Emperor's conciliatory attitude and the missions of Held and the Archbishop of Lund—Abortive Conferences of Hagenau and Worms—The imperial motives—The Landgrave now fain to support conciliatory policy—The "Regensburg Book"—The discussions of the theologians—Deadlock—The Emperor invokes Luther's intervention—Failure of the negotiation for an accommodation — Contarini's attitude — The Emperor's political success.

II. THE POLICY OF REPRESSION - - - 119-126

"The Wittenberg Reformation"—Represents the limit of Protestant concession—Moderate spirit—The Peace of Crêpy—The Emperor temporises pending preparations for final struggle with Protestants—Progress of Protestantism—Demoralisation of Schmalkald League—Determines to strike against the Elector John Frederick and the Landgrave Philip.

CHAPTER V

FINAL CONTROVERSY WITH ROME - - 127-160

I. POLEMIC AGAINST THE PAPACY - - - 127-150

Luther's later combativeness—Attack on "The Donation of Constantine"—The Bull of Paul III. and Beelzebub—The project of a papal Reform of the Church—Treatise on "Councils and Churches" — Its sources — The authority of Councils subordinate to that of Scripture—For the first four ancient

PAGES

Councils Scripture the only standard—Examination of their proceedings—Powers of General Councils and their limitation—Representation of the laity as well as the clergy—His conception of the Church and its usages—His parting shot—" Against the Papacy at Rome "—Its blemishes—Its forcible indictment of the Papacy—The Papacy built on a false interpretation of history and a false exegesis—Its anti-Christian character—The Pope the vicar not of God, but of the devil.

II. In Defence of the Reformation - - 151-160

His feud with Duke George of Saxony—His amplified Lord's Prayer—Dr Gowk—The Archbishop of Maintz and Von Schönitz—Epigrams of Lemnius—Luther exposes and denounces the Archbishop—Attack on Duke Henry of Brunswick—" Against Hans Worst "—Vindication of the Reformed Church and apology for the Reformation—The charge of habitual drunkenness against the Elector John Frederick and Luther's refutation—The Landgrave's bigamy and the demoralisation of the princes.

CHAPTER VI

LUTHER AND THEOLOGICAL DISSENT - - 161-204

I. Conflict with the Antinomians - - 161-179

John Agricola—Differs from Melanchthon on relation of the Law to the Gospel—Luther's view—Agricola's view—Luther calls it in question—Agricola's Theses and Luther's counter-Theses—His continued suspicion of Agricola in spite of repeated reconciliations—Renewal of inquisition—Luther explains his former and his present teaching on the subject—Demands an absolute recantation—Further friction and irremediable breach—Agricola complains to the Elector—The Elector institutes proceedings — Flight of Agricola to Berlin — Difficulty of confident judgment on the merits of the controversy.

II. Renewed Conflict with Zwinglians and Radicals 179-191

Luther's outbursts against the Zwinglians—Caspar von Schwenckfeld and his theological standpoint—His sacramental teaching—Luther's harsh repulsion—Sebastian Franck—His distinctive religious radicalism—Luther's sweeping condemnation—Something to be said for his inveterate antagonism from the practical point of view—His " Short Confession of the Holy Sacrament " against the Zwinglians—His atrabilious dogmatism—Accentuated tendency to attribute heresy to his opponents.

III. Luther and the Jews - - - - 192-204

Early tolerant attitude towards the Jews—Treatise on the Jewish Birth of Jesus—Its temperate and persuasive tone—Gradual change of tolerant attitude — " Against the Sabbatarians "—" On the Jews and their Lies "—Its fierce Anti-Semitism—Criticism of his attitude—" On the Last Words of David "—Retains his implacability to the end.

CHAPTER VII

PAGES

THE END AND ITS SEQUEL - - - 205-225

I. Decline and Death - - - - 205-210

Recurring ill-health—Overstrain and pessimism—Pathetic utterances—Threatens to leave Wittenberg—His journey to Eisleben—Negotiates an agreement between the Counts of Mansfeld—Sudden illness and death.

II. Defeat and Ultimate Vindication - - 210-225

His prophecy of coming calamity to Germany—The Emperor strikes at the Elector and the Landgrave—His successful offensive movements—Appears to be master of Germany—Attempts to settle the religious question—The Augsburg Interim—Resolute Protestant spirit—Widespread opposition on personal, political, and religious grounds—Revolt of the Elector Maurice and his confederates—Flight of the Emperor—The Treaty of Passau and the religious Peace of Augsburg—Criticism of the religious settlement—Limitations and weakness of the Reformation from the standpoint of religious liberty—Confessionalism—Its advantages and drawbacks—Grandeur of the Reformation movement—Its prospective scope and efficacy—Extent and check of the Lutheran Reformation—Its place as an international force taken by Calvinism—Melanchthon's later divergence from Luther.

CHAPTER VIII

LUTHER AND HIS WORK (1) - - - 226-272

I. Luther as he was - - - - 226-241

Bugenhagen's estimate — Melanchthon's appreciation — Luther's personal appearance—His portraits—Impressions of contemporaries—The social instinct—His marriage and his high valuation of family life—His married life—"Doctor Kethe"—Luther in his home—His "Table Talk"—Critical estimate—Practises the simple life—The charges of drinking and drunkenness—Doctor Plenus—His denunciation of the drinking habits of the age—His weakness and his power as a publicist—Tendency to hyperbole—Conscious of his failings in this respect.

II. Luther as Prophet - - - - 241-251

Luther compared with previous reformers—The creative, prophetic type of man—Another case of Athanasius *contra mundum*—Fortunate in his age—Secret of his power—Roman Catholic criticism of him and what it forgets — Mediæval Christianity—Luther's teaching a revolution of it—His contention that Romanism is alien to the teaching of Christ and therefore heretical—A new conception and a new type of the religious life—Criticism of his direction of the Reformation—His inconsistencies and his weaknesses—The reverse side of the prophet—Nevertheless his work a mighty impulse forward.

PAGES
III. LUTHER AS EVANGELICAL MORALIST - - 251-264

His religious experience the key to his work as a reformer—The problem of salvation, religious and ethical — Mature expression of it in his Commentary on Galatians—The mystic Christ-life of the believer—Christian liberty not the life of licence—Sham believers—Repudiates the Antinomian version of his doctrine of justification attributed to him by the Romanists—The ethical note of his personal piety—The Cross in the centre of his piety—Wherein it differs from the conventional ecclesiastical type—Substitutes the piety of common life—God in nature and life—Its naïvety—His principle of justification not unethical—Criticism of M'Giffert's view—Paul and Luther—Its relative practical ineffectiveness—Causes—Its questionable presuppositions—Application of ethical teaching of the Gospel in the economic sphere.

IV. LUTHER AND BIGAMY - - - - - 265-272

Landgrave Philip's plea for a bigamous union—Submits it to Bucer, and, through Bucer, to Luther and Melanchthon—Their deliverance on the subject—Explanation of their compromising attitude—Criticism—" A good, strong lie "—Luther regrets his consent.

CHAPTER IX

LUTHER AND HIS WORK (2) - - - 273-329

I. TRANSLATOR OF THE BIBLE - - - 273-283

Cardinal importance of Bible reading—Translation of the Old Testament—Repeated revision of the whole Bible—Difficulty of the task—Knowledge of original languages—The principle of a free, as against a literal, rendering—Exacting labour of finding the German equivalent of Hebrew idiom—The question of his indebtedness to previous translations — Substantial originality and linguistic merits—Appreciations and criticisms—Its high value—Influence of his personal religious convictions—Widespread demand and diffusion.

II. EXPONENT OF THE BIBLE - - - - 283-304

The Bible the source of true theology—Luther as Professor of Holy Writ—Manner and method—Style and inspiration—Living reproduction of contents—God the supreme Artist—Conscientious preparation of lectures—Conscious of his inadequacy—The allegoric interpretation and Luther's attitude—The literal and historic meaning—Not satisfied with purely scholarly, factual exegesis—His subjectivism—Scripture its own interpreter — Lucidity of Scripture — Supreme and sole authority of Scripture—The Living Word—The Word, not the Church, the sovereign medium of salvation—Its distinctive theme is Christ—Unbounded veneration for the Bible—The question of its verbal inspiration—The Bible as the Word of God, and the Word of God in the Bible—Criticism of certain books

PAGES

of Old and New Testaments—Harnack and others infer that he holds its verbal inspiration — Thimme and others hold the negative view—Only what is apostolic, *i.e.*, teaches Christ, is of absolute authority—What is not apostolic is not infallibly binding—His critical attitude dominated by his religious standpoint—Antagonist of purely rational exegesis.

III. THE PREACHER - - - - - 304-318

Luther's early preaching—His " Postils "—Acts for various periods as Bugenhagen's *locum tenens*—His sermons mark an epoch in the history of preaching—The conventional popular Roman Catholic preacher—" The time of serious things "—The qualifications of a good preacher—To preach simply a great art—The exalted office of the preacher—Preaching becomes the central part of divine service—*Prædicamus Christum*—Luther's power as a preacher—Failure and success.

IV. LUTHER IN HIS CATECHISMS AND HYMNS - 318-329

Catechetical instruction—Its importance and necessity—Its neglect in the mediæval Church—Its subject-matter—This instruction obligatory on all—When did Luther begin to write hymns ?—His contributions to the evangelical hymn-books—His high evaluation of Church music—Borrows and adapts from the Psalms and the old Latin hymns—Imparts a striking originality—Distinctive note and didactive purpose—" Ein feste Burg "—When written—Did Luther compose the melodies ?

CHAPTER X

NATIONAL AND EXTRA-NATIONAL INFLUENCE 330-360

I. NATIONAL INFLUENCE - - - - 330-337

Luther a national hero—German to the core—Protagonist of the idea of the national Church—Fails to establish national Church—Fain to substitute the territorial Church—Distinctive German evangelical piety—" God has begun to speak German "—His influence on German political and social systems—Far-reaching effects of his religious principles—Protestantism involves the fact of progress—Criticism of Troeltsch—Culture of modern Protestant Germany—What it owes to Luther.

II. EXTRA-NATIONAL INFLUENCE - - - 337-360

The Netherlands—The Scandinavian lands—Poland—Bohemia—Hungary—Southern Slav lands—Italy—The question of Zwingli's indebtedness to Luther—Calvin an early disciple of Luther—His reply to Sadoleto—His relations with Melanchthon and veneration for Luther—Lefèvre as Luther's predecessor in France—His influence displaced by that of Luther—French " Lutherans "—Luther's influence in England—Tyndale's

PAGES

translation of the New Testament and Luther's—The Ten Articles and other indications of Lutheran influence on the early English Reformation—Attitude of Henry VIII.—Cranmer's advance under Lutheran influence in the reign of Edward VI.—The First Book of Common Prayer and Forty-Two Articles—Influence of Lutheran writings in Scotland—Patrick Hamilton a disciple of Luther—George Wishart and John Knox—Scottish appreciation of Luther—Thomas Carlyle and Luther—This far-expanding movement the measure of Luther's greatness—Enlightened and ill-informed criticism.

INDEX - - - - - - - 361-372

LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION

CHAPTER I

THE EMPEROR AND THE PROTESTANTS

I. THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

LUTHER's refusal to recognise the Swiss as brethren, if explicable from the theological, was singularly short-sighted from the political, point of view. The predominance of the Emperor as the result of the conflict with the League of Cognac was a serious menace to the evangelical movement. Charles had undertaken, in the negotiations with the Pope at Barcelona, and still more solemnly on the occasion of his imperial coronation at Bologna in February 1530, to repress heresy in Germany if the heretics should prove unamenable to persuasion. He had given a sufficiently explicit indication of his policy in his instructions to his commissioners at the Diet of Spires (1529), and had arrested the Protestant deputies who had been sent to Italy to present the Protestation of the minority.

It was their conviction of the danger to the Protestant cause, in view of these facts, that had inspired the efforts of the Landgrave and Zwingli to cement a great Protestant league in spite of dogmatic differences, and Luther, in magnifying these differences and ignoring this danger, undoubtedly misread the signs of the times, as the Diet of Augsburg was to show in the near sequel. Instead of preparing betimes to close up the Protestant ranks against the evil day, he set himself to frustrate as far as possible all further attempts at accommodation with even the South German cities, except on the basis of an absolute agreement in doctrine. A separate attempt to bring about a theological understanding with them accordingly proved futile. Despite the failure of the Marburg Conference, the Protestant princes and the representatives of Strassburg and Ulm met at Schwabach in the middle of October to negotiate a union which should combine at least the North and the South, if not the Swiss cities, in defence of the Protestant faith. As a preliminary, the Wittenberg theologians insisted on the acceptance of the series of articles which they had drawn up before the Marburg meeting, and in which the doctrine of consubstantiation was explicitly emphasised as a *sine qua non* of an alliance. Instead of meantime leaving it an open question, as in the Marburg Confession, it was raised to the position of an article of faith, acceptance of which was absolutely necessary for membership of the Christian Church.[1] This was a decisive relapse into the very system of binding the Christian to profess belief in such abstruse dogmas as articles of faith, against which Luther had himself so energetically protested in the case of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the representatives of Strassburg and Ulm, led by Jacob Sturm, an ardent adherent of Zwingli, refused to commit themselves to this exclusive dogmatism. Their refusal was followed by that of the other representatives of the South German cities at an additional conference at Schmalkalden in December, and thus the policy of union was wrecked by the intolerant dogmatism of Wittenberg at a time when political sagacity as well as dogmatic zeal was clamantly needed to save the Reformation. To this danger Luther, in his sanguine belief in the Emperor's irenic intentions, remained impervious. In matters political he was still an impractical doctrinaire who could only see things from his own standpoint. His vision in this case was more than ordinarily opaque.

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[1] Soliche kirch ist nichts annderst dann die glaubigen an Cristo weliche obgenannte Artickel unnd Stuck glaubenn unnd leern. Die Schwabacher Artikel, "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 89-90. For the origin of these articles, see Schubert, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der evangelischen Bekenntnis und Bündnisbildung," 1529 and 1530, "Z.K.G.," 1908, 322 f., and 1909, 28 f. See also his "Bekenntnisbildung und Religionspolitik," 21 f. (1910). He has shown that the articles were not composed by Luther after the Marburg Conference, as was hitherto assumed, but in the summer of 1529 in connection with the proposal for an alliance with the South German and Swiss Protestant cities. They were the work, not of Luther only, but of the Wittenberg theologians. See also introduction to the articles in "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 81 f.

As the result of his triumph over his enemies Charles was, for the time being, the dictator of the West. His unimpeachable orthodoxy and his political interests alike made him the convinced enemy of the Lutheran heresy, and his set policy was the restoration of the unity of the Church on both political and ecclesiastical grounds, by force in the last resort.[2] It was to realise this policy as well as to cope with the Turkish menace to the empire and to secure the election of his brother as his prospective successor as Emperor, under the title of King of the Romans, that he crossed the Alps on his return visit to Germany in the spring of 1530, after an absence of nine years. He was, however, naturally averse to the use of forcible measures such as the legate, Campeggio, who accompanied him, kept urging in the interest of the faith, and was disposed to compass his purpose by negotiation if possible. Moreover, in spite of his triumph in Italy over the coalition of his enemies, he was still hampered by political difficulties in Germany in dealing with the religious question. In 1529 the empire had been exposed to a Turkish invasion, and only with difficulty had the progress of Solyman westwards been stopped at the walls of Vienna. The great Sultan, if driven out of Austria, was practically master of Ferdinand's kingdom of Hungary. In these circumstances it was very hazardous to court by precipitate action the outbreak of civil war in the empire itself, even for the sake of the unity of the Church. He was, too, anxious to secure his brother's election as King of the Romans, and the jealousy of the overgrown Hapsburg power, shared alike by Roman Catholic magnates like the Duke of Bavaria and Protestant princes like the Landgrave, emphasised the urgency of caution, which was not lost on so wary a politician, and rendered the settlement of the religious question by no means a simple issue.

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[2] See Gussmann, "Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Augsburgischen Glaubensbekenntnisses," i. 3 f. (1911).

Hence the mild and politic tone of the missive in which he convoked the Diet to Augsburg in order to deliberate in mutual charity and goodwill on the question of restoring the unity of the Church.[3] He evidently believed it still possible to manœuvre the two parties into agreement. He had apparently no adequate conception of the profound religious cleavage in Germany, and he was destined to a speedy disillusion. In spite of a splendid and cordial reception at Augsburg, which he entered on the 15th June, on the part of both Catholic and Protestant magnates, the spirit of religious antagonism appeared forthwith to rasp the cordiality of his welcome. On the evening of his arrival he requested the Protestant princes, at a special audience, to impose silence on their preachers and to take part in the procession of Corpus Christi on the following day. He was met by a courteous but firm refusal. "Rather than deny God and the Gospel," exclaimed George of Brandenburg, in response to the Emperor's reiterated demand, "I will kneel before your Majesty and let my head be cut off." "Not head off," "Not head off," returned Charles, in a kindly tone, in his broken German.[4] King Ferdinand, who had acted as interpreter, interposed with the remark, at a subsequent conference on the morrow, that the Emperor's conscience could not permit the right of free preaching. His Majesty's conscience, boldly returned the Landgrave Philip, was not lord and master over their conscience.[5] His Majesty had, therefore, to walk in procession without their company,[6] whilst on the question of preaching they ultimately agreed that he should nominate the preachers who, during his stay in Augsburg, should preach the pure Gospel and should refrain from controversy in their sermons.[7] Their compliance with this compromise was in accordance with the advice of Luther, who, though at first disposed to insist on the right of free preaching,[8] ultimately advised the Elector to give way on the ground that the Emperor had the right to impose his commands in his own imperial city, just as the Elector had the same right within his own territories. In such a case right must yield to force.[9]

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[3] Schirrmacher, "Briefe und Acten," 32-33.

[4] *Ibid.*, 58-59; Melanthonis Opera, "Corpus Reformatorum," ii. 106-107, 115.

[5] "Corpus Ref.," ii. 115.

[6] Schirrmacher, 62; "Corp. Ref.," ii. 107-108.

[7] Schirrmacher, 67 f.; "Corp. Ref.," ii. 113 and 116.

This preliminary skirmish did not bode well for the harmony of the Diet's deliberation of the religious question, especially in view of the equally refractory tone of Cardinal Pimpinelli, the spokesman of the Catholic party, who, in his opening sermon on the 20th June, exhorted the Emperor to use the sword of St Paul against the heretics who had spurned the keys of St Peter.[10] The Lutherans, however, adopted a very accommodating tone towards their Romanist opponents in the Confession, which, on the 25th June, they submitted for the consideration of the Emperor and the Diet.[11] Its author was Melanchthon who, along with Jonas, Agricola, and Spalatin, had accompanied the Elector to Augsburg in the beginning of May,[12] and had worked at it during the intervening weeks. In his final revision of it he was influenced by a collection of 404 articles published by Eck and culled from the writings of reformers, including Carlstadt and Hubmaier, as well as Luther and Zwingli, and intended to show the identity of their views with those of the heretics condemned by the Church in ancient and later times.[13] He was further influenced by his conversations with the Emperor's secretary, Valdez, who strove to bring him to meet the Emperor's wishes in the matter of concessions to the other side.[14] It was to rebut the charge of heterodoxy and pave the way to a mutual understanding that the Confession in its final form emphasised so strongly Lutheran orthodoxy against all heretics, ancient and modern. It was divided into two parts, the one treating of doctrine, the other of abuses, and its basis, as far as doctrine was concerned, was the Schwabach articles, which were amplified and toned down so as to minimise the doctrinal points at issue between the two sides, and to emphasise the common points of divergence from the Zwinglians and the Anabaptist sections of the Protestant party as well as the ancient heretics, though the Zwinglians, in deference to the insistence of the Landgrave Philip,[15] are not actually mentioned. The result was a surprisingly temperate statement compared with the writings in which Luther had set forth and defended his distinctive teaching.

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[8] Enders, vii. 286. Beginning of April.

[9] "Werke," 54, 145-146 (Erlangen ed.).

[10] Schirrmacher, 74. [11] *Ibid.*, 89-90. [12] *Ibid.*, 31-32.

[13] "Corp. Ref.," ii. 45. Adversus has (calumnias) volui remedium opponere. Gussmann, "Quellen und Forschungen," i. 102; Richard, "Melanchthon," 195-196 (1902), and "Confessional History of the Lutheran Church" (1909). To counter the bad effect of Eck's articles which were forwarded to the Emperor, the Elector had sent him to Innsbrück a private confession based on the Schwabach articles. This document, which is in the papal archives, was published, with an English translation, by Richard in the *Lutheran Quarterly*, July 1901, reprinted by Stange in "Studien und Kritiken," 1903.

The Confession accordingly emphasises the fact that the Lutherans hold the faith of the Fathers against all heretics, ancient and modern, relative to the Trinity, the redemptive work of Christ, the sacraments (nothing is said about the number of them) and their efficacy apart from the moral character of the priestly celebrant, the Real Presence in the Eucharist as against its opponents, confession, penitence, absolution, and other practices rightly used, obedience to the civil power in all things not involving disobedience to God, the impotence of the will to attain salvation without grace (its natural freedom being admitted and predestination being ignored). On the other hand, it repeatedly asserts, though in a non-controversial spirit, the distinctively Lutheran doctrines of justification by faith and not by works, and of the Church as the community of all believers in which the Gospel is truly preached and the sacraments administered. It appeals, too, to the Scriptures as well as to the Fathers, and assumes or asserts its accordance with them, though it does not put forth the distinctively Lutheran claim to the supreme and sole authority of God's Word in matters of belief. It is also, in the second part, which was based on a number of articles submitted by Melanchthon to the Elector

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[14] "Corp. Ref.," ii. 122-123.

[15] Gussmann, "Quellen und Forschungen," i. 223-224.

HAWARDEN.

at Torgau in the beginning of April,[16] very outspoken in the matter of abuses. It argues forcibly, on theological or practical grounds, in behalf of communion in both kinds and the marriage of the clergy, and against the abuse of the Mass, confession, multifarious fastings, and such external observances, monastic vows, the worldly power of the hierarchy, and the misuse of their function by the bishops in forcing on the Christian community a multiplicity of usages and ceremonies.

As presented to the Diet it bore the signatures of all the princes who had signed the Protestation at Spires, with the addition of the Elector's son, John Frederick, and Count Albrecht of Mansfeld.[17] Of the cities, only two out of the fourteen signatories of the Spires Protestation—Nürnberg and Reutlingen—signed. The absence of the adhesion of the other twelve is significant of the predominance of the influence of the Swiss and Strassburg theologians over that of Luther in the South, and of the impolicy of courting the favour of the Emperor and the Romanists at the cost of alienating a not inconsiderable section of the Protestant party. Melanchthon's moderate and moderating spirit would have been all the more admirable had he refrained from thus seeking to save Lutheranism at the expense of the Swiss and South German Reformers as well as the Anabaptists, and shown as much moderation towards them as towards the Romanists. It was, indeed, advisable to state the evangelical teaching in a conciliatory form with a view to a possible accommodation, and Melanchthon had perforce to consider the political as well as the theological aspect of the question and reckon with the diplomatic demands of Chancellor Brück and the politicians.[18] But it was both weak and illiberal to attempt such an accommodation by sacrificing a party which in most essential respects was identical with his own, and from which, as compared with the Romanists, he differed only in one minor fundamental point. Had he, instead of whittling down the evangelical teaching which they held in common to suit the Emperor's taste, presented a firmer and more comprehensive statement of Reformation principles, the Confession would have made a stronger impression, and, in view of the strength of a united evangelical party, would have stood a better chance of achieving toleration, if not union. Union with the Romanists in doctrine was, as Luther pointed out, really out of the question.[19] Far nobler and also more forcible was the plea of the Landgrave Philip in favour of recognising Zwingli and Oecolampadius as brethren in a common cause, in spite of a difference of opinion on the bodily presence. Against his spirited defence of these brethren and his insistence on the duty and the feasibility of presenting a united front, Melanchthon pleaded the counter necessity of courting the imperial favour and of fidelity to what the Landgrave called merely a speculative dogma.[20] He was still so bitterly estranged from Zwingli's sacramental teaching, and so fearful of the consequences of the imperial disfavour that he was ready to sacrifice the South German Protestants if only the Lutheran cause came off scot-free. His unyielding attitude towards his fellow-Protestants of the South greatly detracts from the merit of his conciliatory attitude towards the other side. It was the safe attitude to adopt in both cases; but it was also the selfish one.

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[16] See Enders, vii. 250 f.; Köstlin, ii. 192; Brenner in the Introduction to the Schwabacher Artikel, Luther's "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 84-85.

[17] Tschackert, "Die Unveränderte Augsburgische Konfession," 230 (1901), and "Die Entstehung der Lutherischen und Reformierten Kirchenlehre," 250 (1910).

[18] Gussmann, "Quellen und Forschungen," i. 106, 447-448.

Nor can his attitude towards the Romanists be called straightforward. It involved the ignoring of radical differences in the matter of transubstantiation, the seven sacraments, the Papacy, for instance, which he carefully kept out of sight, whilst emphasising what after all amounted only to a single divergence of view between Lutherans and Zwinglians.[21] The tendency of the Confession is, in fact, to prove that the exclusion of the Lutherans from the old Church was unjustifiable, and that the antagonism between the two parties was merely a divergence of opinion in regard to certain traditions and practical abuses.[22] A most hazardous proposition surely in view of all that Luther had contended for in his struggle against the dogmas as well as against the institutions of the mediæval Church. The difference between the two sides was certainly more fundamental than these words suggest. From this point of view the Confession is a very diplomatic document, and for diplomatic reasons it represents Lutheranism as not in all respects what it really was—a breach in essential doctrines with the mediæval Church. In his anxiety to manœuvre the two parties into accord, Melanchthon laid himself open to the charge not only of trimming, but of misrepresentation.[23]

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[19] Enders, viii. 79. Letter to Melanchthon, 3rd July. In tanta coecitate et pertinacia daemonum, quid speres aluid quam reprobari ?

[20] See his letters, along with Brenz, to the Landgrave, and the Landgrave's reply, "Corp. Ref.," ii. 92 f.

[21] This is emphasised on pp. 88 and 92 of the "Unveränderte Augsburgische Konfession."

On the other hand, as far as it goes and apart from the diplomatic omission of essential points of difference, the doctrinal part of the Confession does give in a moderate spirit Luther's characteristic teaching on faith and works, grace and merits, etc., and in the second part, dealing with practical abuses, decidedly reflects his militant attitude. Its claim to be founded on the teaching and practice of Scripture and the Ancient Church is powerfully argued. It makes out a strong case for the Reformed as against the Romanist position. The Reformation, as presented by Melanchthon, is a restoration of ancient Christianity, though it may not be so accordant with the mediæval Church as he plausibly makes out. The evidence adduced in support of this contention as well as the argumentation based on it is no small tribute to the author's literary skill and the cogency of his systematic statement.[24]

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[22] See Tschackert's edition of the Augsburg Confession, "Die Unveränderte Augsburgische Konfession," 115. Hace fere summa est doctrinae apud nos, in qua cerni potest nihil inesse quod discrepet a scripturis, vel ab ecclesia catholica, vel ab ecclesia Romana, quatenus ex scriptoribus nobis nota est. Quod cum ita sit, inclementer judicant isti qui nostros pro haeriticis haberi postulant. Tota dissensio est de paucis quibusdam abusibus.

[23] The charge is made the most of by Grisar,. "Luther," iii. 329-330; *cf.* ii. 358. It is admitted by Harnack, "Hist. of Dogma," vii. 26.

[24] The originals of the Latin and German versions presented to the

Luther had generally, if rather lukewarmly, approved of the original draft, as far as completed, which the Elector sent him on the 11th May,[25] whilst confessing that he was incapable of expressing things so softly and gently.[26] With the assistance of Chancellor Brück, Melanchthon had continued the work of extending and revising it during the next six weeks without further submitting it for Luther's judgment, and it was only after its presentation to the Diet on the 25th June that he sent a copy of it to Coburg.[27] In reply, Luther was rather dubious about the concessions which it made to the Romanists, and thought that it yielded more than enough. For his part he was resolved not to give away anything more, come what might,[28] though he subsequently expressed his joy that he had lived to see the day that the evangelical faith had been publicly professed in the presence of the Emperor and the Diet.[29] He still, too, cherished the sanguine belief in the Emperor's goodwill and the hope of a favourable settlement through his good offices. At the same time, he was sceptical about the possi-

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Emperor in the presence of the Diet on the 25th June have been lost. The Latin version was placed in the imperial archives at Brussels, whence it was taken in the reign of Philip II. to Spain, where it is supposed to have been destroyed. From the extant MSS. of copies made by the deputies of some of the cities and sent by them to their respective authorities, Professor Tschackert has edited the Confession in its original form under the title of "Die Unveränderte Augsburgische Konfession, deutsch und lateinisch" (1901). See also his "Entstehung der Lutherischen und der Reformierten Kirchenlehre," 286 f. (1910). The most recent work on the Confession is that of Wendt, "Die Augsburgische Konfession" (1927). Recently Dr Gussmann discovered a manuscript of the German version in the German National Museum at Nürnberg, which is said to throw additional light on the original texts. See *Kolnische Zeitung*, 17th Nov. 1925. The edition published by Melanchthon himself already contains changes made by him, and to these changes he added in subsequent editions, in accordance with his changed attitude on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, etc.

[25] Enders, vii. 328.

[26] "Werke," 54, 145 (Erlangen ed.), 15th May. On the question of Luther's attitude see Gussmann, "Quellen und Forschungen," i. 103, 442-443.

[27] "Corp. Ref.," ii. 140; Enders, viii. 33, 26th June.

[28] Enders, viii. 42-43, 29th June.

[29] *Ibid.*, viii. 83, to Cordatus, 6th July.

bility of achieving a doctrinal agreement, and the most he hoped for was "a political peace" (*pacem politicam*), and even this only at the cost of suppressing certain radical differences, such as the papal power, which Melanchthon had, not very straightforwardly, left out of the Confession.[30] Meanwhile he was practically *hors de combat*, since he was still under the imperial ban, and the Elector had on this account not dared to include him in the suite of theologians whom he had taken with him to Augsburg. He had, therefore, prudently left him behind in the castle of Coburg, some days' journey to the north, where, as at the Wartburg, he could only influence the course of events by his letters and his literary activity, and where he suffered once more from a protracted attack of insomnia and nervous exhaustion, for which the solitude and rich diet sufficiently account. That he had lost none of his bellicose spirit is shown by the "Exhortation to the Ecclesiastics Assembled at Augsburg" (May 1530), whom he once more arraigned in his most aggressive mood and on whom, whilst willing to leave them their jurisdiction on certain conditions, he proclaimed war to the death if they would not reform themselves and cease opposing the Gospel.[31]

II. The Rejection of the Confession

Melanchthon's naïve expectation of achieving a union by means of this diplomatic composition proved, as Luther had forecasted, illusory. There was too much real antagonism between the two parties, both on the points which the Confession adduced and on those which it discreetly ignored, to permit of union. Moreover, the Catholic majority had not come to Augsburg, as the Lutherans assumed and as the imperial summons suggested, to deliberate on the faith with their adversaries. They had come on the understanding that the Church possessed the true faith and that the Emperor's duty, with their support, was simply to vindicate it. Hence the refusal to follow the Lutheran tactic and present a Confession of their own in order that the Emperor might play the part of arbiter between the two systems of doctrine—a course which Charles seems to have favoured. The more intolerant section, on the other hand, led by the Archbishop of Salzburg and Duke George of Saxony, insisted that he should forthwith require the submission of the heretics and, in case of refusal, make use of force to compel it. The more moderate section, led by the Archbishop of Maintz, advocated the milder course of first presenting a formal confutation of the Confession to the Diet and then demanding the submission of the heretics. This was the course ultimately adopted by the Emperor, and with this task he charged a commission of theologians including Eck, Faber, Cochlaeus, and others of Luther's old antagonists[1] (26th June).

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[30] Enders, viii. 133 (to Jonas, 21st July). Scilicet Satan adhuc vivit et bene sensit Apologiam vestram *leise treten* et dissimulasse articulos de purgatorio, de sanctorum cultu, et maxime de antichristo Papa.

[31] Vermahnung an die Geistlichen versammlet auf dem Reichstag zu Augsburg, "Werke," 24, 356 f. (Erlangen ed.); Enders, vii. 313, 332, 367.

Meanwhile, Melanchthon was exerting himself to win the favour of the legate, Campeggio, by amplifying the concessions of the Confession in a series of negotiations. His pliancy, which went the length of offering to recognise the authority of the Pope and the bishops in return for the concession of communion in both kinds and the marriage of the clergy, at least till the meeting of a Council,[2] only compromised still more seriously the Reformation, without gaining the goodwill of the legate. Campeggio, he was warned from Italy, was merely dissembling and would be satisfied with nothing except absolute submission to the Pope.[3] The Pope had, in fact, refused to have anything to do with the Lutherans on any terms short of such submission.[4] Ultimately the Confutation, which, after being at Charles's request shorn of the violent invective of the first draft,[5] was presented to the Diet on the 3rd August, left no dubiety on the point. It was, indeed, in its revised form moderate and even courteous in tone. But while it recognised such doctrines as those of the Trinity and the Person of Christ as orthodox, it rejected others in whole or in part, including that of justification by faith in the Lutheran sense; stoutly upheld the existing ecclesiastical system and usages; and profusely quoted Scripture as well as the Fathers in support of its conclusions.[6] It must be said that, in quoting its authorities, it also strained not a few of the Scriptural texts, which could not otherwise be made to support the later development of Roman Catholic belief and practice. On the other hand, it forcibly pointed out that the claim of the Confession to be in general accord with such belief and practice could not honestly be maintained.

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[1] Schirrmacher, 98. [2] "Corp. Ref.," ii. 169-174.

[3] *Ibid.*, ii. 227 and 243-244.

[4] Ranke, "Deutsche Geschichte," iii. 183-184.

[5] "Corp. Ref.," ii. 198; Schirrmacher, 108-110.

On the conclusion of its recital, Charles declared that he would abide by it as a true defence of the faith, required the Protestant princes to accept it as such, and intimated his determination, in case of refusal, to enforce it as the guardian of the Roman Church.[7] He refused, too, the request of the Protestant princes for a copy of the Confutation, and Melanchthon, in composing his apology for the Confession, was fain to rely upon some notes taken by Camerarius during the reading of it.

In this deadlock the Landgrave, who had secretly, if not openly, opposed the policy of union with the Romanists in preference to that with the Zwinglians, and saw nothing but disaster to the Reformation from a continuance of it, abruptly left Augsburg without asking the imperial permission[8] (6th August). Charles was, however, not prepared to close the discussion and face a religious war. Nor was he free to dispense with the aid of the evangelical princes in the matter of the Turkish war and the election of his brother as King of the Romans. He accordingly requested the other princes to remain for negotiations,[9] which the more moderate

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[6] The Confutation is in Walch, xvi. 1219 f. Digest in Schirrmacher, 171 f. See also Ficker, "Die Konfutation der Augsburgischen Bekenntnis" (1891).

[7] "Corp. Ref.," ii. 245-246, 250-251; Enders, viii. 176 f.

[8] Enders, viii. 184-185; "Werke," 54, 204 (Erlangen ed.).

[9] Schirrmacher, 192-194; Enders, viii. 184.

Catholics were ready to continue, in the hope of breaking their opposition by threats or diplomacy. Threats and diplomacy were alike unavailing. Melanchthon, indeed, in the course of the negotiations during the next six weeks[10] in reference to the Mass, communion in both kinds, clerical marriage, the jurisdiction of the Pope and the hierarchy, with a series of commissions nominated to examine the Confession anew, repeated his previous offer to the legate to accept the rule of the Pope and the bishops in return for even the temporary concession (*i.e.*, till the decision of a General Council) of communion in both kinds and the marriage of the clergy.[11] On the question of the restoration of confiscated ecclesiastical property, the Protestant princes were prepared to make substantial concessions.[12] The other side insisted that the question of communion in both kinds should be left an open one, and that the Lutherans should recognise the right of communion in one kind as equally justified. On the question of the marriage of the clergy they would only agree to recognise meanwhile marriages already contracted, but would not concede the further exercise of this right.

This was more than Luther could stand. He had been willing at first to essay the expedient of a not too straightforward diplomacy and had sent letters of encouragement and comfort to the Elector, Melanchthon, and others. But after the rejection of the Confession by the Emperor and the Diet, there was for him no alternative for the evangelical princes and their theologians but to pack up and leave Augsburg.[13] He now expected the immediate return of his colleagues. "We have sufficiently done our part," he wrote to Melanchthon on the 15th August. "It now remains for the Lord alone to act. May He rule and preserve you."[14] The renewed attempt to reach an agreement on the basis of farther concessions seemed to him a mere waste of time, and as the weeks slipped away he became increasingly anxious over the pliant attitude of his lieutenant at Augsburg. Towards the end of August he decisively raised his voice in a series of letters to the Elector, Melanchthon, Jonas, and Spalatin against further temporising, and plainly intimated that he had no faith in these attempts at an accommodation on the terms indicated to him. He declared emphatically in the letter to the Elector, 26th August, against the surrender of communion in both kinds and the restoration of the Mass in the sacrificial sense, even with the explanatory gloss suggested by Eck. "We are ready," he wrote in reference to these and other concessions, "to suffer and give up anything that is in our power. But what is not in our power we ask that they do not require of us. What is not of God's Word is not in our power to accept, and what without God's Word has been established in the matter of worship we also cannot possibly accept."[15] "Have a care," he warned Melanchthon at the same date, "that you do not give more than you have, so that we may not be driven anew to a more arduous and dangerous struggle in defence of the Gospel. I know that you always except the Gospel in these agreements, but I fear that later the other side will pretend that we are perfidious and inconsistent if we do not preserve what they wish to obtain from us, and whilst understanding our concessions in the largest possible sense, will give to their own the least possible. In brief, this negotiation for a doctrinal agreement is altogether displeasing to me. It is to attempt the impossible unless the Pope is willing to abolish his Papacy. It is sufficient to have rendered a reason for our faith and to have sought peace. How can we hope to convert them to the truth?"[16] He roundly told them that they were being tricked by those who, having failed to suppress the Gospel by force, were bent on securing their object by guile.[17] To Spalatin he wrote more sharply. "I hear that, albeit not willingly, you have begun a wonderful work at Augsburg, viz., that of uniting the Pope and Luther. But the Pope will not, and

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[10] See Schirrmacher, 196 f.; Walch, xvi. 1630 f.

[11] Schirrmacher, 213, 287 f. On Melanchthon's weak attitude, see Gussmann, "Quellen und Forschungen," i. 123-124, 459-460.

[12] Schirrmacher, 291, 295; Ranke, "Deutsche Geschichte," iii. 197.

[13] Enders, viii. 190.

[14] *Ibid.*, viii. 191.

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[15] "Werke," 54, 192 (Erlangen ed.).

[16] Enders, viii. 220.

[17] See especially the letter to Jonas, 26th Aug., Enders, viii., 221-222.

Luther declines. Look ye to it that ye do not throw away your labour. If, in spite of both, ye carry the thing so far, then I will follow your example and unite Christ and Belial."[18] "Free is Luther," he added two days later (28th August) in reference to the contingency of their giving way, "and free is the Macedonian (as he called the Landgrave Philip). Be strong and act a manly part."[19] "Surely," he again exhorted Melanchthon a fortnight later (15th September), "you have done far more than sufficient and it is high time to leave the matter in God's hands. Only be a man and hope in Him. . . . I will canonise you all as faithful members of Christ. What more of glory do you seek? Is it a small matter to have furnished a faithful service to Christ and to have shown yourselves worthy of Him? Far be it from you to hold the grace of Christ in such little esteem."[20]

Melanchthon's irenic spirit was not without a certain justification as against the more rabid dogmatism on both sides. At the same time, his pliancy in the matter of the recognition of the papal and episcopal jurisdiction, etc., was a real danger to the Reformation as far as it was an emancipation from an oppressive system on behalf of liberty of thought and conscience, which Luther in principle professed, which he had done so much to vindicate in his struggle with Rome, and with which this system was incompatible. Moreover, his pliancy was actuated by a shrinking dread of the consequences of fighting for and maintaining this liberty as well as his distaste for the dogmatic strife which this struggle had evoked. Nor was he himself really free from the dogmatism which he disliked in others, as his attitude towards the Zwinglians as well as the Anabaptists shows.[21] Certain it is that his pliancy had by this time aroused widespread suspicion and alarm,[22] and this alarmist feeling had been conveyed to Luther in letters from the Landgrave Philip, Spengler, Link, and others.[23] He cannot and will not believe in these tales, he writes to Melanchthon in reference to these reports, on the 20th September, and is confident that he has not betrayed the Gospel or kept back something from him. But he is evidently seriously alarmed and begs him to clear up the matter by return of post.[24] To Jonas he wrote far less considerately. He has heard that they have betrayed his cause and have for the sake of peace made far too great concessions. He would fain give no credence to such reports. But he is by no means so sure of their steadfastness as he professed to be in the letter to Melanchthon. If these reports turn out to be true, then the devil has indeed succeeded in disrupting the Lutheran party. "For I will not stand such conditions[25] even if an angel from heaven should urge and command me. . . . Break off such negotiations and return at once. . . . If war comes as the result, let it come. We have prayed and done enough."[26]

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[18] Enders, viii. 217.

[19] *Ibid.*, viii. 233, to Spalatin.

[20] *Ibid.*, viii. 258-259.

[21] See in addition to his letters to the Landgrave Philip, already noted, his communication to Luther on his interview with Bucer, "Corp. Ref.," ii. 315, 26th Aug.; *cf.* the letter of Brenz to Isenmann, *Ibid.*, ii. 356, 8th Sept.

[22] See his letter to Luther, 1st Sept. Enders, viii. 242.

These letters breathe the spirit of the heroic hymn, *Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott,* which Ranke[27] and others have assigned to these critical days, but which was already in print in the previous year. His warrior soul hurled defiance to the devil and a world of enemies. The same absolute reliance on God, in the face of the anxiety and despondency reflected in the communications of Melanchthon and others from Augsburg, finds poetic expression in the letter to Chancellor Brück, in which he strove to inspire them with his own heroic faith. "Recently I beheld two wonders. The first when, looking out of the window, I saw the stars of heaven and the magnificent dome of God. And yet I saw no pillars on which the Master supported this dome. Nevertheless the heaven fell not and the mighty dome still stands firm. Some there are who seek such pillars and would fain grasp and feel them, and because they cannot do so, they writhe and tremble as if the heaven must fall on their heads for no other reason than that they cannot see and grip the pillars. If they could only do so the heaven would then stand firm. The other wonder I saw was a great mass of thick clouds hovering over our heads with such a weight that it could only be compared to a great sea. Again I beheld no bottom on which they leaned nor vats in which they were contained. And yet they fell not, but only greeted us with a sour countenance in passing and fled away. And when they had passed there shone forth over earth and roofs the rainbow. Moral—Trust in God even when the prospect of deliverance by human means seems impossible. For God's thoughts are far higher than our thoughts. Should He hear us when we pray that the Emperor may give us peace, we should ascribe the honour to the Emperor and not to Him. But He Himself will give us peace, despite what Emperor or Diet may do, so that He may have the honour which belongs to Him alone."[28]

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[23] Enders, viii. 237, 240, 265; "Werke," 54, 193 (Erlangen ed.).

[24] *Ibid.*, viii. 264-265.

[25] Referring to certain propositions made by Behus, the Chancellor of Baden, and Truchsess, the representative of Würtemberg, to Melanchthon and Brück. Enders, viii. 254 f.

[26] Enders, viii. 266-268, 20th Sept.

[27] "Deutsche Geschichte," iii. 191-192.

Before the letters to Melanchthon and Jonas reached their destination[29] the Emperor had determined to close the negotiations and bring the matter to a crisis by a decisive deliverance against the Confession. Happily, in the face of this crisis Luther's previous letters had infused the fighting spirit into the Elector of Saxony and the Protestant princes. "The Diet of Augsburg," said Luther, "has made a hero of the Elector." Though of a pacific disposition, he was a staunch Lutheran and was resolved not to sacrifice his convictions even in the face of the imperial threat of deposition.[30] He would, he said, not deny his God for any worldly consideration. Under his resolute leadership the princes and the cities adhering to them refused to bow to the ultimatum which the Emperor presented to the Diet in the form of a Recess on the 22nd September. In this document Charles once more declared that the Confession had been incontestably refuted from Scripture, whilst allowing its adherents six months' respite (till the 15th April 1531) in which to accept the articles, in the Romanist sense, on which agreement had not been reached, and which were to be so accepted pending the meeting of a General Council. During the six months' respite they were to prohibit further controversy through the Press in matters of faith, to refrain from making further propaganda in favour of their "sects" within their territories or elsewhere, or molesting the adherents of the old faith in their midst, and were to unite with His Majesty and the other Estates in such measures as should be decided on against Sacramentarians and Anabaptists. In return the Emperor undertook to use his influence with the Pope to summon a General Council for the reformation of practical abuses in the Church.[31]

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[28] "Werke," 54, 183-186 (5th Aug.).

[29] They were sent to Spengler at Nürnberg to be forwarded to Augsburg, and as the rupture between the Emperor and the Protestant princes had meanwhile taken place, Spengler, instead of forwarding them, returned them to Luther, who himself communicated them to Melanchthon and Jonas after their return. "Werke," 54, 195 (Erlangen ed.).

[30] This threat had been conveyed to him by the Elector of Brandenburg at an interview with the evangelical princes on the 7th Aug. Schirrmacher, 192; *cf.* Enders, viii. 186.

Whereupon the Saxon Chancellor, Brück, on behalf of the princes and six cities which adhered to them,[32] denied the contention that their Confession had been confuted from Scripture, declared their determination to abide by it, and offered an apology for it, which was couched in stronger terms than the Confession itself.[33] As the Emperor was about to receive this document, Ferdinand whispered something in his ear, and he finally refused to receive it.[34] In response to the imperial threat, conveyed to them by the Elector of Brandenburg on the following day (23rd), to proceed to extremes against them in the case of non-compliance with the Recess, they protested that in this matter they were bound by their allegiance to God's Word and to conscience, while declaring their readiness to obey His Majesty in all things lawful.[35] As at Spires, they appealed to God and conscience as the supreme law in matters of faith; as at Spires, too, they greatly weakened their noble protest on this ground by declaring at the same time their violent intolerance of Zwinglians and Anabaptists.

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[31] Schirrmacher, 310-313; Walch, xvi. 1849-52.

[32] Besides Nürnberg and Reutlingen, the Confession had been accepted by Kempten, Heilbronn, Winsheim, and Weissenburg.

[33] Walch, xvi. 1291 f. It was later enlarged and published by Melanchthon after he had obtained a copy of the Confutation. *Ibid.*, xvi. 1335 f.; and see Tschackert, "Entstehung," 293 f.

[34] Schirrmacher, 314.

With this spirited retort the Elector left Augsburg. "Uncle," said Charles, somewhat reproachfully on taking leave of him, "I should not have expected this of you." The old man keenly felt the pain of defying the Emperor and the Diet and was too much moved to reply. Only the strength of his religious convictions had given him courage to face such a crisis, and Charles himself seems to have realised that political or personal opposition had, in his case at least, nothing to do with defiance of his will.[36]

In further negotiation with the cities which had not signed the Augsburg Confession, Charles was met by an equally recalcitrant spirit except in the case of Nördlingen and Esslingen, which gave way. Five of them—Frankfurt, Ulm, Schwabach, Hall, and Augsburg itself—refused to submit to the imperial ultimatum. Four more—Strassburg, Constance, Memmingen, and Lindau—which had presented a separate Confession (*Confessio Tetrapolitana*) representing a compromise between the Zwinglian and the Lutheran view in the matter of the sacrament,[37] and drawn up by Bucer and Capito, likewise rejected the demand for their submission on the ground of a confutation by the Romanists of this document, which was read on the 22nd October. The strongly worded Confession presented on behalf of Zwingli, which, to the horror of Melanchthon, in whose eyes he seemed "to have lost his reason," [38] decisively rejected the Real Presence and other Romish errors, was contemptuously ignored.[39]

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[35] Walch, xvi. 1865, f.; Schirrmacher, 313-320.

[36] See Ranke, iii. 206.

[37] Gussmann, "Quellen und Forschungen," i. 33 f.; Schirrmacher, 103-105. For the negotiations with the cities see *Ibid.*, 321-326.

[38] "Corp. Ref.," ii. 193.

[39] "Opera," iv. For a digest of it see Curtis's "History of Creeds and Confessions," 199-201; Staehelin, "Zwingli," ii. 417-418; Guss-

Despite the disunion within the Protestant ranks, the number of the protesting cities and princes at Augsburg was thus equal to that which had signed the Protest at Spires. Charles had failed either to manœuvre or to overawe the Protestant opposition into compliance with his will, and he was now faced with the prospect of a religious war if he should attempt to put his threat into execution. His embarrassment was increased by the fact that their refusal to bow to the religion of the majority was combined with a refusal to consent to the subsidy against the Turks, which the majority conceded.[40] Nor could he count on the support of the Saxon Elector for his policy of electing his brother Ferdinand King of the Romans, to which the other Electors ultimately consented. He was irritated by this opposition on political as well as religious grounds, and this irritation found expression in the Edict with which he closed the Diet on 19th November, and which expressed anew his determination to maintain the old faith, renewed the Edict of Worms against its subverters, restored the jurisdiction of the hierarchy and the ecclesiastical property of which it had been deprived, and empowered the *Reichskammergericht* or Imperial Court of Appeal to deal with all contraventions of these latter provisions and execute due punishment on those guilty of such.[41] Even without the use of force the Protestants could, by means of this Court, be sued and deprived of all the powers and ecclesiastical revenues of which they had possessed themselves at the expense of the old Church. Pending more forcible measures, Charles hoped to paralyse their opposition by means of litigation in a Court which was empowered to enforce the law in these matters and whose decisions must, perforce, be adverse to the Protestant side.

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mann, "Quellen und Forschungen," i. 32-33, who sharply criticises its form.

[40] Schirrmacher, 322-325; Walch, xvi. 1923-1924.

[41] The Edict is in Walch, xvi. 1925 f.

III. THE LEAGUE OF SCHMALKALD

In view of this menacing situation, the only alternative for the Protestants was to have recourse to the Landgrave's policy of a defensive alliance. The right of resistance, which he and Zwingli had advocated in opposition to the Lutheran theologians, was no longer a merely theological question, and Luther was ultimately compelled by the logic of facts both to curb his dogmatism on the sacramental question and surrender his theory of passive resistance. Hence the readiness with which he listened to Bucer's overture for religious union at a conference at Coburg in the end of September. Among Protestant theologians Bucer was the one that possessed in the greatest measure the talent of persuasively explaining away doctrinal differences to meet an emergency of this kind. He had already approximated, too, the Lutheran standpoint in the "Confessio Tetrapolitana," and he now managed to persuade Luther that he believed in the Real Presence and yet only in the spiritual nourishment of the believer by the Omnipresent Body and Blood of Christ. With this compromise Zwingli himself, who was smarting under the attacks made on him by the Lutherans since the Marburg Conference, was not satisfied. He did not really believe in the bodily presence, and even for the sake of union he could not accept a view that conceded so much to a doctrine which was for him both unscriptural and irrational, especially as its acceptance involved a far greater sacrifice of conviction on his side than on that of Luther. His refusal frustrated the hope of a union with the Swiss;[1] but the agreement of Luther and Bucer paved the way for the inclusion of the South German cities in a defensive league which the Protestant party met to negotiate at Schmalkalden in the end of December 1530 and in March 1531, and at Frankfurt in June.

The preliminary question to be settled was that of the right of resistance in defence of the Protestant faith. In this emergency the Saxon jurists questioned, on legal and constitutional grounds, the right of the Emperor to impose his will on the various Estates of the empire in matters religious. The power of the Emperor, they pointed out, was limited by the conditions of his election. He was not the absolute sovereign, but the elected head of the empire, and was not invested with more authority over its ruling members than that of the president of an aristocratic republic. Their relation to him was, in fact, similar to that of the Grand Council to the Doge of Venice, or that of the ancient Roman Senators to the Consuls, or of a Chapter to its bishop. "The Estates of the empire rule along with the Emperor, and the Emperor is no (absolute) monarch."[2] Whether the comparisons adduced exactly applied to the Constitution of the empire might be debatable. At all events the empire was in no sense an absolute monarchy, if only in view of the fact that the actual power had come to reside in the territorial princes rather than in its elected head, or even in the Diet and the central imperial government, which were notoriously ineffective as the organs of legislation and administration. Moreover, the ingenuity of the Saxon jurists strengthened the case for resistance on constitutional grounds by arguments drawn from the Canon Law. According to the canonists an appeal against an unjust sentence entitles the aggrieved party to resist the execution of the sentence. The evangelical princes and cities having appealed on behalf of their faith to a future Council against the decision of the Diet, the decision is *ipso facto* suspended, and if, nevertheless, the Emperor attempts to enforce it, the evangelical party is legally justified in resisting this attempt. Further, to obey an Edict which is contrary to God's Word is an intolerable injury to His Word, and in such a case it is the bounden duty of the princes to obey God rather than man. Whilst the Emperor may convene a Council in the event of the Pope refusing or neglecting to do so, he has no power to decree in matters religious. He can only execute what a Council has ordained. Nor does it avail to adduce the decisions of former Councils, such as that of Constance against Hus, in justification of the repression of the Lutheran teaching, seeing that the Council of Basle reversed the judgment of Constance in the matter of communion in both kinds and other reforms, for which the Lutherans stand. Moreover, the Recess of the Diet of Augsburg expressly refers the decision of the religious question to a future Council, and the Emperor cannot take it upon himself to execute against the Lutheran princes and cities a judgment that has not yet been given.[3]

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[1] For these negotiations see Ranke, iii. 244 f.; Staehelin, ii. 422 f.

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[2] Ranke, iii. 225-226.

On these grounds the Protestant princes and cities resolved not only to stand by one another in defence of their faith against the legal proceedings of the Reichskammergericht, but even to resist the Emperor should he attempt to use force against them, though they did not mention him by name, and disclaimed any aggressive intentions against His Majesty or anyone else.[4] Though there was some hesitation on the part of the Margrave of Brandenburg, the deputies of Nürnberg, and others to accept the Saxon theory and to commit themselves to the conclusion which the Saxon jurists boldly drew from it, the theory ultimately did its work in removing such scruples. The defeat of the Swiss Protestants at Kappel in October 1531 accentuated the urgency of co-operation in Germany, though it seems to have given much doctrinal satisfaction to Lutherans as well as Romanists. Before the end of the year, as a result of further conferences at Nordhausen and Frankfurt in November and December, the league became a compact organisation embracing, besides the princes, the more influential cities of the north as well as the south—Magdeburg, Bremen, Lübeck, as well as Nürnberg, Ulm, Strassburg—with a formal Constitution which regulated the command, the number, and the support of the army to be maintained in case of war.[5]

Before the initiation of these negotiations at Schmalkalden, Luther himself had come into line with the jurists on the question of the right of resistance. Previous to the meeting of the Augsburg Diet he was still convinced that rebellion against the Emperor on behalf of the evangelical faith was incompatible with the teaching of the New Testament. In a letter of the 6th March 1530, we find him impressing on the Elector the obligation of passive obedience even in the face of an attempt to suppress the Gospel.[6] Seven months later, under the influence of the hostile declaration of the 22nd September, his dogmatic attitude has become less rigid. This modification is patent in the "Warning to his dear Germans," written in October 1530, though not published till April 1531.[7] In this impassioned appeal he attacks the Romanist instigators and abettors of the policy of force, rather than the Emperor himself, whom he regards as the tool of the Pope and the hierarchy. These he treats as the sworn enemies of God and the Gospel, who are actuated only by the desire to maintain the old corrupt and tyrannic ecclesiastical régime from motives of self-interest, and whom he arraigns in his most vehement style. Like Pharaoh, they have hardened their hearts against every effort to bring them to an understanding of the truth and reform themselves, and in their blindness and obduracy in striving to crush the Gospel, they have proved themselves to be the enemies of God, and are rushing, like him, to their doom in the Red Sea. They have deliberately chosen a policy of bloodshed and havoc on behalf of their iniquitous and tyrannic régime, and they presume on his doctrine of passive obedience to give them an easy triumph in carrying out their nefarious purpose. He still holds this doctrine, and will incite no one to resist their bloody tyranny. But let them beware of blindly presuming on this doctrine, which by no means covers their arbitrary and violent policy. Resistance to such murderers and bloodhounds is no rebellion. Just as a man is justified in defending his life and property against a lawless aggressor, so every one is entitled to resist and repel the declared enemies of God and the Gospel. If they will have war, let them have it as far as he is concerned.

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[3] "Werke," 64, 206-209 (Erlangen ed.).

[4] See the two agreements as the result of the conferences at Schmalkalden in Dec. 1530 and March 1531, in Walch, xvi. 2142-2150 and 2170-2174.

[5] Ranke, iii. 279 f. See also Winckelmann, "Der Schmalkaldische Bund und der Nürnberg Religionsfriede" (1892).

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[6] "Werke," 54, 137 f. (Erlangen ed.).

[7] See the Introduction to this manifesto by Clemen and Brenner, "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 252 f.

On their heads, not on his, rest the responsibility and the guilt. They are the rebels who strive to set in the place of justice their own tyranny, as in the case of Münzer, whose lawless example they are following. It boots not to adduce the will of the majority of the Diet, since the contention that the Confession has been refuted from Scripture is absolutely baseless, and the subsequent negotiations were merely a device, under the guise of a few plausible concessions, not sincerely meant, to undermine and destroy the evangelical teaching. Nor does it avail to adduce in such a cause the will of the Emperor, whom he is still disposed to believe these knaves have misled and overreached. "If the Emperor shall declare war in the Pope's behalf, or on account of our teaching, let no one abet his purpose or show him obedience, but be assured that God utterly forbids him to obey his mandate. Whoever yields obedience for such a purpose is disobedient to God and shall lose both body and soul in such a war. For the Emperor in this matter acts not only against God and His divine law, but against his own imperial law, oath, and obligation."[8] The justification of the refusal of obedience on constitutional and legal grounds he leaves to the jurists, and argues his case from the religious and practical point of view. He maintains that the Confession has incontestably proved that his doctrine is founded on the Word of God, and that to take part in a war for its suppression is to betray the Gospel. It would, moreover, frustrate the reformation of the gross errors, superstition, and immorality of a debased Papacy and priesthood who have perverted and travestied both religion and morality. "Whoever has been to Rome knows, alas, that things are worse than anyone can describe or imagine."[9] To uproot by the sword all the good achieved by the Reformation for the sake of such a corrupt and tyrannic system is, in short, to do the devil's work and incur the guilt of all the evils from which he has so long been striving to deliver the Church and the world.

From the practical point of view he had a very strong case and he writes with all the force and verve of a convinced believer in the truth and justice of his cause. He claims to speak as the prophet whom God has commissioned to warn the Germans in the face of this supreme crisis in the national welfare and their individual salvation.[10] It would be vain to expect from the prophet in the face of such a crisis anything like a dispassionate diagnosis of the motives or the religious standpoint of his theological opponents. To dissent from the Augsburg Confession is necessarily to be an enemy of the Gospel. To cling to the old beliefs and practices is equally an evidence of diabolic perversity, without the possibility of conscientious conviction. From both the theological and the practical point of view, the issue for Luther is an issue between God and the devil, the Lutherans being on the side of God, their opponents on the side of the devil. Apart, however, from the evident dogmatic bias which underlies his conception of the issue between the two parties, his inflaming protest against the policy of seeking to decide this issue by brute force, in order to re-establish the old corrupt and oppressive system, was fitted to carry conviction over the length and breadth of the empire. It was one of those prophetic utterances which, as Randolph said of John Knox's sermons, was more potent to stir the minds of men than the blast of ten thousand trumpets. It ignores, indeed, the fact that the Emperor and the more enlightened section of the opposition were not, on principle, hostile to at least a practical reformation of the old papal and priestly system. But it certainly was a questionable preliminary to such a reformation to undo by force the reforming work of Luther, who could justifiably claim to have challenged and shattered the evil system which the merely practical reformers had in vain assailed for over a hundred years.

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[8] "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 291.

[9] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. III., 304.

The "Warning" is farther significant of the psychological effect on Luther of the hostile attitude of the Augsburg Diet. In this document the theologian is struggling to square the case for active resistance with the doctrine of passive resistance, which he still believes to be in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament. At the same time, he is no longer prepared to regard resistance to the forcible suppression of the Gospel as rebellion, whilst leaving the justification of it, on legal grounds, to the jurists. A fortnight later he has discovered, albeit reluctantly, that their contention on behalf of this right is not in conflict with this teaching, and joins Melanchthon, Jonas, Spalatin, and others in officially recognising not only the right, but the duty of the princes to repel force with force in defence of the Gospel. "Since the doctors of law have established in what cases resistance to constituted authority (*Oberheit*) is legally permissible, and this contingency has actually arisen; since, farther, we have always taught that the law should function and prevail, inasmuch as the Gospel does not militate against the secular law, we cannot invalidate from Scripture the claim to adopt defensive measures even against the Emperor or anyone acting in his name. And seeing that the situation has now become so dangerous that events may daily render such measures immediately necessary, not only on legal grounds, but as a matter of duty and fidelity to conscience, it is fitting to arm and be prepared against the threatening resort to lawless force. For in hitherto teaching that it is not permissible to resist constituted authority, we were unaware that the law itself permits such resistance."[11]

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[10] "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 290. Weil ich der Deubschen prophet bin, so wil ich meine lieben Deubschen warnen für irem Schaden und Fahr.

The Reformation had thus not only tended to augment the power of the territorial princes. It had eventuated in the consolidation of the evangelical party into a virtual State within the State, based on legal as well as scriptural grounds. The factors of this evolution were both religious and political. Religious conviction undoubtedly operated in it. The Emperor and the majority of the Diet had left the Protestants no alternative but to combine in defence of their faith, and without the element of religious conviction it would have been impossible to array a large part of the empire against its imperial head. It would, indeed, be wide of the truth to regard the League as the device of a few political schemers.[12] The Elector John and the Landgrave Philip were not mere political gamblers. Both of them had told the Emperor to his face that they would sooner give up their lives and their lands than surrender their faith. Though the Landgrave was a born politician and was later to endanger the Reformation for personal considerations (in connection with his bigamous marriage), there is so far no reason to see in his profession of religious conviction mere lip-service to the Gospel. At the same time, political and personal influences undoubtedly contributed both to the formation and maintenance of the League. Antagonism to the overgrown Hapsburg power was not the least effective of these influences. Both the Elector and the Landgrave were, on this ground, opposed to the election of Ferdinand as King of the Romans and, under the Landgrave's auspices, the League went the length of courting the co-operation of the Turks as well as the kings of England and of France,—a most questionable procedure from both the patriotic and the religious point of view, which Luther would certainly not have approved.[13] It became a great political power both within and beyond the empire. From such motives it found supporters in the Catholic party itself, notably in the Dukes of Bavaria and in the Catholic powers whose interests collided with those of the House of Hapsburg. The Reformation became, in fact, a political as well as a religious force of the first magnitude.

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[11] "Werke," 64, 269-270 (Erlangen ed.). The date of this deliverance is not 1531 or 1539, but early in Nov. 1530. See Köstlin-Kawerau, ii. 656; *cf.* Enders, viii. 298. The date is wrongly given as Nov. 1531 in the Introduction to the "Warnung," "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 257. The deliverance was elaborated in two additional statements, "Werke," 64, 270 f.

Meanwhile it proved its efficacy in completely frustrating Charles's policy of compulsion. It was, however, the menace of a Turkish invasion that forced him to hold his hand, in spite of the godsend of the disaster to the Reformation in

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[12] As Armstrong, for instance, ventures to do, "The Emperor Charles V.," i. 259-260 (1910). Vedder allows himself to be unduly influenced by Armstrong in judging the motives of the princes. "The Reformation in Germany," 333-334, 336-339 (1914). On the question whether and how far the Reformation was the outcome of merely material and not religious motives, see Von Below, "Ursachen der Reformation."

[13] His "Heerpredigt widder den Türken" shows that he was not prepared to abet the Turk even to save his own cause. "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 81 f.; Enders, vii. 174 f., 199-200, 204-205.

Switzerland through the defeat of Zürich at Kappel in October 1531, of which his brother was eager to make use to crush the Lutherans in Germany.[14] He had allowed the term of grace for the Protestants (15th April 1531) to expire without attempting to put his threat into execution in view of the determination of the Protestant princes to meet force with force. He had hesitated to turn the victory of Kappel to account for fear of the French king, and now, within a little more than three months after the final organisation of the League, the redoubtable Solyman was once more on the march westwards in an attempt to conquer Germany itself (April 1532). The Sultan was the most effective ally of the Reformation, in spite of Luther's philippics against him.[15] Hence the necessity of renewed negotiations[16] with the Protestants, this time at Nürnberg, and another accommodation in virtue of political necessity, by which Charles undertook to waive the proceedings against the Protestants before the Reichskammergericht (on the score chiefly of confiscated Church property) and bring about the meeting of a General Council within six months, or, in any case, another Diet, for the final consideration of the religious question.[17]

Charles and the Catholic majority were thus indefinitely worsted in the two years' duel with the Protestant minority, which had been welded, in the course of it, into a compact and formidable party, and had not only succeeded in thwarting the policy of repression, but had become a controlling force in both politics and religion. Its efficacy in both respects was apparent in the near sequel when, in May 1534, the Landgrave, with the financial assistance of the French king and the goodwill of the Duke of Bavaria and other Catholic magnates, forcibly restored the Protestant, but rather reprobate, Duke Ulrich of Würtemberg, to the territory of which Ferdinand had taken possession (battle of Laufen), and which was now evangelised by Blarer and Schnepf. He thus dealt an effective blow both at the Hapsburg power and for the extension of Protestantism in South Germany. The Landgrave, it was said, had done more for the Reformation than a thousand books of Luther.[18] In the Peace of Kadan (June 1534), Ferdinand was fain to submit not only to this loss of territory, but to the absolute stipulation that all prosecutions for religion against the members of the League (Sacramentarians and Anabaptists excepted) before the Reichskammergericht, which had not ceased as a result of the Nürnberg agreement, should be departed from.[19]

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[14] See Ranke, iii. 263-264.

[15] See "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 81 f.

[16] For these negotiations see Walch, xvi. 2182 f.

[17] Walch, xvi. 2236 f. The resolution in regard to the convention of a Council or another Diet was embodied in a Recess of the Diet which had met at Ratisbon. The stipulation about the Reichskammergericht was, however, to be kept secret owing to Catholic opposition. Bezold, "Geschichte der Deutschen Reformation," 645.

The success of the League augmented its independence and influence. It was no longer content to abide by the provisions of the Nürnberg Agreement, especially as the Reichskammergericht insisted on exercising its jurisdiction in ecclesiastical cases to the detriment of its members. At a conference in December 1535 it was resolved, not only to renew it for a period of ten years,[20] but to admit to membership all who agreed to accept the Augsburg Confession, without asking the leave of the Emperor, who as a party to the Nürnberg Agreement, which was limited to the original members of the League, was entitled to a voice on the question of its extension. Its ranks were accordingly swelled by the adhesion of Würtemberg, Pomerania and Anhalt, Augsburg, Frankfurt, Hanover, and Kempten; and later (1537-39) of Christian III. of Denmark and Duke Henry of Saxony, Duke George's successor. Moreover, it declared the Reichskammergericht to be a partisan body and refused to bow to its decisions. In the name of religion and conscience, with which worldly interests in this matter coincided (it was a question of the possession of ecclesiastical property as well as the defence of the Protestant faith), it set itself above the law on the pretext, which Wiclif and the

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[18] See Bezold, 659.

[19] Walch, xvi. 2241 f.; Winckelmann, "Die Verträge von Kadan und Wien," "Z.K.G.," 1889-90, 216 f. He criticises Ranke's version of the treaty and its effects.

[20] Walch, xvii. 222.

Hussites had championed and the peasants had vainly striven to apply, that a godless hierarchy had no right to property which it misused.

It was courted from political motives by Francis I., who was once more about to settle accounts with Charles V., and, with much profession of interest in Lutheran theology, invited Melanchthon to Paris to discuss the religious question.[21] Henry VIII. was equally assiduous in the attempt to win its alliance in his fear of a combination of the Emperor and the French king against him, and similarly urged Melanchthon to come and discuss a union between Lutherans and Anglicans.[22] Even the new Pope, Paul III., was fain to court its goodwill and sent a Nuncio, Vergerio, to gain its adhesion for the meeting of a Council in Italy to tackle the reform question in earnest, of which his predecessor had hitherto fought shy.[23] Luther had the satisfaction, in an interview with him at Wittenberg in November 1535, of speaking his mind freely about the papal tactics and perversions of the Gospel and of the futility of a Council under papal auspices, whilst expressing his willingness to take part in it, on the ground that the papists had only too great need of one to teach them the true faith. He adopted, in fact, the superior tone of one who had nothing to learn from, but much to teach, both Pope and Council. "I am of opinion," said he in the course of the meal to which the Nuncio had invited him, "that a free Christian General Council, such as the Pope promises, would be in every way useful and necessary. I desire and expect it, not indeed for our sakes, who by the grace of God have no need of a Council, since we possess already the pure and true doctrine and have churches constituted in accordance with the divine Scriptures. I desire it solely for the sake of foreign nations in order that through it they also may have the benefit of our teaching." To the agitated Nuncio this was sheer arrogance. "What language is this, Martin?" ejaculated he. "Beware lest you take too much upon you. You are but a man and can err. Would you be wiser, more learned, holier than so many Councils and Fathers? Know better than the multitude of highly learned men who profess the name and religion of Christ, scattered throughout the whole earth?" "I acted the real Luther throughout at the late interview," he wrote to Jonas on the 10th November, "and addressed the legate in the most disconcerting terms."[24] Ultimately, at a meeting at Schmalkalden in February 1537, the League declined to entertain the proposal.

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[21] Negotiations with the League in 1535 and letter to Melanchthon in Walch, xvii. 370 f.; *cf.* "Corp. Ref.," ii. 785.

[22] Walch, xvii. 262 f. For the negotiations on a series of articles to this end between Henry's envoys and the Wittenberg theologians, see Mentz, "Die Wittenberger Artikel von 1536" (1905), in "Quellenschriften zur Geschichte des Protestantismus." See also the Introduction to the Schmalkald Articles by Reichert and Brenner, "Werke," l. 160 f., and Prüser, "England and Die Schmalkaldener," 1535-1540, 19 f. (1929).

[23] Walch, xvii. 2292 f.

For its guidance Luther composed a series of articles in which he gave expression to his antagonism to the papal power and the Romish doctrinal system and usages in far more energetic terms than Melanchthon had done in the Augsburg Confession (the so-called Schmalkald Articles).[25] He refused to recognise the Pope as head of the Church by divine right and declared that he was only Bishop of Rome and that he would not submit to his usurped jurisdiction.[26] Though supported by substantial historic reasons, Melanchthon demurred to this sweeping judgment and professed his readiness, for the sake of peace and unity, to recognise his supremacy by human right over the bishops, provided he allowed the profession of the evangelical faith.[27] Owing to Luther's prostration by illness, he once more took the chief place as theological mentor of the Protestant party in the discussion of the question at Schmalkalden, and under his guidance the League, ignoring the Lutheran articles, resolved to abide by the Confession of Augsburg and explicitly denied the papal claim to obedience by divine right. By its refusal to have anything to do with a Council under papal auspices, it vindicated the claim of the Protestant party to exist as a separate Church as well as practically an independent power in the State. The idea of anything like an organic union between Romanism and Lutheranism was, in fact, an impracticable one, though this attempt was by no means the last of its kind. The utmost that could be hoped for was mutual toleration, and the day of mutual toleration was still far off.

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[24] "Corp. Ref.," ii. 987; Walch, xvi. 2293-2295; Friedensburg, "Nunciaturberichte aus Deutschland," i. 540 f. (1892); i.; Enders, x. 267.

[25] "Werke," l. 192 f.; "Werke," 25, 110 f. (1538) (Erlangen ed.). English translation in "The Christian Book of Concord," or "Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," 277 f. (1851).

[26] "Werke," l. 213 f.; "Werke," 25, 122 f. (Erlangen ed.); Walch, xvi. 2340 f.

[27] "Werke," l. 253; Walch, xvi. 2366.

On the other hand, Luther and his fellow-theologians had been striving to cement the religious union of the Protestant party in further conference with Bucer and the South German divines, in May 1536, over the Real Presence in the sacrament. Melanchthon had learned to moderate his intolerance of the Swiss doctrine after reading a work of Oecolampadius on the subject, and Luther himself was now disposed to be less exacting in the conditions on which he was prepared to extend the right hand of fellowship to those who differed from him on this question. Whilst still insisting on the Real Presence, he was ready to leave the question whether the ungodly partook of the Body of Christ equally with believers, an open one. On this understanding he agreed to the Wittenberg Concord, to which the South German theologians also gave their adherence.[28] It represented a truce rather than a complete agreement, and the Swiss, whilst professing a desire to live amicably with their Lutheran brethren, did not finally accept it. Luther was, in the meantime at least, generous enough to say some kind things about Zwingli and to maintain friendly relations with his successor, Bullinger.[29]

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[28] " Corp. Ref.," iii. 75 f. For the articles referring to the Eucharist see also Tschackert, " Entstehung der Lutherischen Kirchenlehre," 261. English translation of them in " Christian Book of Concord," 576.

[29] See, for instance, his letter to Bullinger, 14th May 1538, Enders, xi. 363-364. For details, Köstlin-Kawerau, ii. 349 f.

CHAPTER II

THE LATER RELIGIOUS RADICALISM

I. The Anabaptist Movement (1524-36)

The term Anabaptist, or Rebaptizer, was applied to the radical wing of the evangelical movement, which insisted on adult baptism as a fundamental principle of primitive Christianity.[1] The Anabaptists disowned the implication contained in this designation. Adult baptism was, they held, the sole Scriptural practice, and infant baptism was, therefore, spurious and invalid. To speak of rebaptism was thus a misnomer in the case of those who, on their principle, had never really been baptized. Moreover, apart from what they considered the Scriptural practice, adult baptism was the only permissible form in virtue of the character of the rite as a sign and symbol of the regeneration of the believer by the Spirit of God. An essential of this regeneration is the personal faith of the recipient of baptism, and of this personal faith infants were entirely incapable. Hence their insistence on this fundamental principle, though in itself and apart from the personal faith of the baptized person, the rite might have no spiritual efficacy.

Luther so far agreed with them in regarding baptism as a sign and symbol of regeneration and in emphasising the importance of personal faith for the efficacy of this sacrament. From this point of view both he and Zwingli were at first disposed to admit the force of the contention in favour of adult baptism. At the same time, they believed that infant baptism was also in accord with New Testament practice, and that it was contrary to the example of Christ Himself to exclude the little ones from the Church on earth.

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[1] Kessler, " Sabbata," 142 (ed. Egli and Schoch, 1902).

They accordingly refused to admit the necessity of this radical innovation in deference to the Anabaptist contention, and sought to meet the difficulty on the score of the lack of personal faith on the part of the infant recipient of the rite by adopting the theory of a supernatural infusion of faith, or of a representative faith on the part of the parents.

The antagonism of the two parties was not confined to the question of adult as against infant baptism. It involved in addition a radically divergent conception of the Church and the State, of the rights of the individual as against the State Church in its organised evangelical form, of the character of the Christian life, of the application of the principle of the authority of Scripture, and the interpretation of Scripture teaching.

The Anabaptists held that the Church, as delineated in the New Testament, is a community of believers who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and of whose regeneration, as expressed in a personal profession of faith, baptism is the indispensable seal and symbol. This conception both narrowed the Church into a brotherhood of baptized believers and emphasised its separation from the State and the world. It separated them not merely from the mediæval Church, but from that of the reformers, who not only championed the validity of infant baptism, but included within the Reformed Church all who accepted its creed and maintained communion with it. For the Anabaptists the Church consisted only of the regenerate, and this Church they claimed to be.[2] For the reformers it included both the regenerate and the unregenerate in one visible communion, and only the invisible Church consisted exclusively of the regenerate of all the ages. Luther, indeed, as we have seen,[3] in principle discarded the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church, and regarded the Church on earth as essentially the community of believers who are associated together by their faith, which is a spiritual, invisible bond, though this Church as an organisation has necessarily a visible form. He had, in fact, mooted the idea of finding a place in this organisation for an inner circle of advanced Christians within the *Volkskirche*, the Church in the wider sense, which, though minus adult baptism, would have realised the narrower Anabaptist conception of the Church. He had, however, abandoned it as both impracticable and questionable, and had, in virtue of necessity, admitted and sought the co-operation of the State in organising the territorial Church. He hesitated thus to apply the sectarian conception of the Church which, for the Anabaptists, became the distinctive one. For them the Church could not contain alike the wheat and the tares—the regenerate and the unregenerate—as in the parable of Jesus. They insisted that it could only consist of baptized adults regenerated by the Spirit. All outside this narrow sect, even if professedly Christian, were outside the Church.[4]

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[2] Kessler, "Sabbata," 142, desglichen ir Versammlung die waren, hailigen, christlichen kirchen zu sin.

[3] "Luther and the Reformation," iii. 281 f.

This narrow association, living in strict obedience to the Gospel or law of Christ, is a self-governing community, exercising an inherent jurisdiction (the power of excommunication and internal regulation) apart from State control or co-operation. The other-worldly character of the regenerate community and its inherent autonomy in things spiritual precluded such control or co-operation. They refused to attribute, with the reformers, even a limited jurisdiction to the State in relation to the Church, though the moderates recognised its lawfulness in its own sphere as a divinely ordained institution.[5] The State, as a secular institution, can have no right to legislate or judge in things spiritual. Nor is it permissible to the members of the regenerate community to exercise office in the secular administration,[6] to take oaths, to bear arms, or inflict penalties. In accordance with the Sermon on the Mount, and also with Luther's general principle, the supreme obligation of the Christian is to suffer wrong, not to resent or resist it, to renounce the ways of the world, to bear the Cross. In this respect their attitude was that of the early Christians and the later Montanists. Separation from, not compromise with, the world is the inexorable law of the Christian life.

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[4] Kessler, " Sabbata," 141-142.

[5] See, for instance, Hubmaier's " Tract on the Sword," translated by Vedder, " Balt. Hubmaier," 279 f. (1905).

[6] Kessler, " Sabbata," 143. Kain Christ mög an oberer sin; dann die Christen habend kainen gewalt anderst dann den ban oder usschliessen. Moderates like Hubmaier, however, did not debar the Christian from holding office in the State, " Tract on the Sword," 303. Denck, on the other hand, disallowed it, Coutts, " Hans Denck," 182-183 (1927), Edinburgh Univ. Ph.D. Thesis.

Hence the puritanic character of their ethical ideal. In this respect they represent a reaction not only from the degenerate mediæval Church, but from the Reformation in their dissatisfaction with its failure to achieve the moral regeneration of society. This failure they attributed, in their rather one-sided, carping fashion, to the compromising attitude of the reformers towards the State and its institutions, whilst ignoring the fact that the writings of Luther, for instance, who emphasises the ethical function of the State, are full of denunciation of the rulers of this world and the ungodliness reigning in high places. They insisted on the strict interpretation and practice of the law of Christ as the only means of realising their earnest-minded though narrow ethical and religious ideal. They sought farther to alleviate the social and economic evils of the time by the practice of a self-denying philanthropy, in the communist spirit of early Christianity.[7]

With this puritanic conception of the Christian life in both its individual and corporate aspects, they combined a thoroughgoing Biblicism. Whilst both wings of the Reform movement agreed in emphasising the sole authority of Scripture for teaching and practice, the Anabaptist wing went farther than Luther and Zwingli in the application of this principle. They would have no compromise with historic institutions and usages which had not the express sanction of Scripture, and which their evangelical opponents were prepared to leave intact for reasons of expediency, or on the ground that what is not expressly opposed to Scripture may be assumed to be in accord with it. For both the individual Christian and the Christian community the law of Christ, as interpreted by them, is the only norm, and any development beyond this is not only superfluous but invalid.

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[7] Kessler, "Sabbata," 142. Undernomend sy och, he says of the early Zürich Anabaptists, wie die ersten Christen, gemainschaft der zitlichen gütter ze halten. Sebastian Franck (" Chronica," 193) also emphasises their readiness to share their goods with their brethren.

Whilst this radical tendency thus differentiated the Anabaptist movement from the Reformation in both its Lutheran and Zwinglian forms, the movement represented in reality various degrees of radicalism. Its sectarian spirit showed itself in the marked tendency to contention and division within its ranks and the all too ready resort to the weapon of excommunication against the dissident.[8] It represented, in fact, not a single sect, but a congeries of sects, according to the degree of radicalism which its leaders exemplified. Moreover, under the influence of persecution there erelong developed an extremist section, which, in opposition to the moderates, advocated the forcible regeneration of the world in the spirit of a Münzer and in accordance with a fantastic belief in the immediate establishment of the millennial kingdom of God on earth. With such fanatic excrescences the original Anabaptists had no sympathy, and it is both inaccurate and unjust to slump all to whom this opprobrious term was applied in one homogeneous sect, and predicate of all the fanatic views of the more violent section. The original Anabaptists, in fact, disclaimed the use of force in the service of religion or the subversion of the civil authority by the sword.[9]

The religious radicalism represented by the movement was more or less prevalent long before the sixteenth century in the sects which dissented from the doctrine and practice of the mediæval Church, and the term Anabaptist or Katabaptist was applied to some of them before the age of the Reformation. It is a much debated question whether, and how far, the movement was derived from these pre-Reformation sects within or outside the Church. Ritschl traced the origin of the movement to the Spirituals of the Franciscan Order.[10] Keller, on the other hand, derived it directly from the older evangelical sects—Waldensians, Taborites, etc.—which fostered the spirit of antagonism to the mediæval Church among the masses.[11] Vedder, following Keller, also assumes a genetic connection between them and these sects,[12] and Lindsay appears to agree with him.[13] "The Anabaptists," says Vedder, "are not an offshoot of the Reformation, though they might be called its root, since they are both older and more primitive in practice."[14] The widespread existence of such mediæval communities in the age of the Reformation is, however, very problematic. Whilst the movement does reproduce in some of its forms mediæval beliefs and tendencies—practical and mystical—it seems to me to be directly attributable to the impulse derived from the evangelical Reformation.[15] It was, in fact, historically the fruit of the religious and intellectual ferment of the time. It merely developed in a more radical direction the evangelical teaching of Luther and Zwingli, and, like the religious Reformation, it owed not a little to the influence of humanism as represented by Erasmus. As in the case of the evangelical reformers, many of its leaders, both in Switzerland and Germany, had been disciples of Erasmus before ultimately advancing beyond the Erasmian and even the Lutheran and Zwinglian reforming standpoint and becoming the champions of a more radical Reformation. As the older humanists ultimately found Luther too radical and parted company with him, so a number of the younger scholars found him too conservative, and ended by demanding a more thorough application of the implications of his teaching.

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[8] See, for instance, Franck, " Chronica," 193.

[9] See, in addition to Hubmaier's "Tract on the Sword," the letter of the early Zürich Anabaptists to Münzer. For the letter see Tumbült, " Die Wiedertäufer," 14-15, in " Monographien der Weltgeschichte," vii. (1899).

[10] " Geschichte des Pietismus," i. 29 f. (1880). See also the article

"Anabaptisten" in Herzog-Hauck, "Encyclopädie," by Uhlhorn (3rd ed.).

[11] "Geschichte der Wiedertäufer" (1880), and "Die Reformation und die älteren Reformparteien" (1885).

[12] "Balt. Hubmaier," 9 f.

[13] "History of the Reformation," ii. 431 f.

[14] "Balt. Hubmaier," 13.

[15] My own independent conclusion is shared by Troeltsch, "Die Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen," i. 800 f. (1912). Hegler, "Geist und Schrift bei Sebastian Franck," 14 (1892), also shares this conclusion, whilst accepting the influence of mediæval ideas and tendencies.

Anabaptism, as an offshoot of the Reformation, originated at Zürich in connection with, and ultimately in opposition to, the work of Zwingli. Its leaders were Grebel, Stumpf, Manz, Haetzer, Blaurock, Reubli, and Brödli. Manz and Haetzer were notable Hebrew and classical scholars. Grebel was also a man of culture, who had studied at the Universities of Vienna and Paris, and was the son of one of the city councillors. Blaurock was a monk of Chur, noted for his eloquence. The other three were priests of neighbouring parishes. A similar dissenting movement had been started, as we have seen, in Saxony and Thuringia by Münzer and the Zwickau prophets, who, however, laid less stress on rebaptism than on the doctrine of the inner Word, the subjective illumination of the believer by the Spirit, and the revolutionary establishment of the kingdom of God. Münzer was not really an Anabaptist. Though he had his doubts about the validity of infant baptism, he did not abandon the traditional practice, and he and his followers were outside the distinctive Anabaptist movement. Towards the fugitive leaders of this revolutionary tendency, the Zürich radicals maintained a sympathetic, if non-committal attitude. They do not seem to have shared Münzer's chiliastic fancies. As their letter to him proves, they decisively rejected his doctrine of the use of force in the religious and social reformation of the world, and professed a simple belief in the Word of God in opposition to the notion of special revelations, by dreams and visions and individual illumination, apart from the Word.

So aggressively did the Zürich radicals assert their opinions against the teaching of Zwingli, that the Zürich Council was fain to order a Public Disputation on the question of infant baptism in January 1525. It adjudged the victory to Zwingli and Leo Juda, and on the strength of this victory forbade rebaptism, and directed the Anabaptists to have their children baptized within a week, on pain of banishment.[16] In consequence of this sentence they removed to the village of Zollicon, where they definitely organised themselves into a brotherhood on the basis of adult baptism, to which they now submitted themselves.[17] Their numbers increased in spite of persecution, and several additional disputations took place, resulting in the aggravation of the penalty of banishment into that of death by drowning, which was justified on the ground that their tenets were subversive of civil order as well as of religion, and to which Manz fell a victim in January 1527.[18] Several others were also drowned and a number more died from the harsh treatment meted out to them in prison. Zwingli was especially active in the controversy against them, and wrote several works which are sadly marred by the violent controversial spirit of the age. He accuses them of immorality and hypocrisy as well as heresy, in much the same biased spirit as his papal opponents levelled such charges against himself. In this controversy he was as vituperative and superciliously dogmatic as Luther, from whose controversial violence against himself he had by no means learnt the lesson of charity and moderation in dealing with such opponents. His approval and advocacy of the barbarous treatment of these pious and well-meaning sectaries is a sad blot on his memory, and unfortunately it attaches to most of his fellow-reformers in Switzerland and Germany.

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[16] Kessler, "Sabbata," 142.

Persecution only widened the movement, which was extended by the exiles to other parts of Switzerland and to Germany—to Bern, Appenzell, St Gall, Schaffhausen; to Waldshut, Augsburg, and elsewhere in Germany. At Waldshut it gained in Balthasar Hubmaier one of its most notable recruits. Hubmaier had studied under Eck at the University of Freiburg, where he took his master's degree, and became his colleague at that of Ingolstadt, where he graduated Doctor of Divinity in 1512. From Ingolstadt he migrated in 1516 to Regensburg to fill the office of cathedral preacher, and signalised his zeal in this capacity as a persecutor of the Jews, as well as an effective preacher. It was at Waldshut, whither he removed in 1521, that, as a result of the study of the Pauline Epistles and intercourse with the Zürich reformers, he developed into an adherent of the reformed doctrine. He took, in fact, an active part in the Disputation at Zürich in October 1523, and succeeded, in spite of the opposition of the Austrian Government, to which Waldshut was subject, in carrying his congregation over to the reformed faith, and ultimately, in 1525, to Anabaptism, to which he was converted by Reubli. He was also, by this time, an advocate of complete toleration in matters of belief, and strongly condemned the use of force by the secular power against heretics, as his tract "Concerning Heretics and those who burn them" shows. His aggressive advocacy of his new opinions brought him into collision with Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and others of his Swiss friends. He replied to Zwingli's tracts on the subject, and henceforth took a leading part in the Anabaptist movement. He was also, to some extent, connected with the peasant movement for social amelioration on the basis of the Gospel, and revised the articles drawn up by the revolting peasants of the neighbourhood, whose march on Waldshut had originated the great rebellion. On its suppression he was compelled to flee towards the end of 1525, and sought refuge in Zürich, where he disputed personally with Zwingli in January 1526, publicly recanted, recalled his recantation, was imprisoned and tortured, abjured once more, was dismissed the city, and betook himself to Augsburg and ultimately to Nikolsburg in Moravia. Here he laboured with phenomenal success for two years, in spite of dissension with an extremist party, till he was seized by order of Ferdinand, carried to Vienna, and burned as a heretic. His wife, who shared his confession, was drowned in the Danube.[19]

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[17] Kessler, "Sabbata," 142; Jackson, "Zwingli," 245-246; Tumbült, 21-22. They did not practise immersion, but baptized by pouring water on the head.

[18] Kessler, "Sabbata," 164; Jackson, 252 and 260.

It was during his brief sojourn at Augsburg that he is said to have won another notable recruit in Hans Denck. Denck had studied at Ingolstadt and Basle, had been a brilliant member of the Erasmian circle in the latter city, and listened to the theological lectures of Oecolampadius, who in 1523 recommended him for the post of rector of St Sebaldus' School at Nürnberg. He was a man of high culture and most attractive personality, on the testimony of both friends and foes,[20] and his scholarship is evidenced by his collaboration with Haetzer in translating the prophets. Like the sectaries of Zürich, he was not satisfied with the doctrinal and ecclesiastical Reformation in progress at Nürnberg, and speedily came into collision with Osiander, its zealous protagonist, and was driven from the city in consequence (January 1525). Under the influence of Münzer, whom he met at Nürnberg, he adopted the mediæval mystic teaching on the inner Word, though he kept himself free from Münzer's revolutionary fanaticism. In him the movement acquired only a casual connection with this mystic tendency, since the Anabaptists in the narrower sense held by the sole authority of the written Word for teaching and practice, and Denck's subjective teaching, like that of his fellow-humanist, Bünderlin, whom he influenced,[21] is rather a reflection of his own independent thinking than that of the movement with which he temporarily associated himself.

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[19] For a more detailed account of his career, see Vedder, "Balt. Hubmaier" (1905); Loserth, "Hubmaier und die Anfänge der Wiedertaufe in Mähren" (1893); Hoschek, "Hubmaier" (1867), English translation by Everts in *Texas Baptist Hist. Mag.* (1891 and 1892); Tschackert, "Entstehung der Lutherischen Kirchenlehre," 132 f.

There is, he held with the mediæval mystics, an inner Word as well as the outward Word contained in the Bible, and God continues to speak through this Word to the pious soul. The aspiration after God is implanted in man's nature, which is not hopelessly corrupt and enslaved as Luther taught, but is capable of knowing and communing with Him through the operation of His Spirit in the heart. This inner Word, testifying of God and the mind of God, not the letter of Scripture, is the vital thing in the life of the believer, though the written Word is needful to quicken, guide, and strengthen it. But the written Word is not set up as an infallible and final rule, apart from the Spirit-inspired experience of the individual, by which God continues to illumine the mind. Experienced truth is alone of religious value, since it is in a man's experience that he knows God and God makes Himself known to him. No external authority, be it that of the Church or of an objective revelation, can be a sufficient substitute for the experienced Word.

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[20] Kessler, for instance, who did not share his opinions, wrote appreciatively of his character and scholarly attainments, "Sabbata," 151, 273.

[21] On Bünderlin, a kindred spirit, see Jones, "Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," 32 f. (1914).

With this capacity to seek and know God, man, though sinful, has the power to will the good and strive for its realisation. " God has given free will to man that he may choose for himself either the good or the evil." " God compels no man, for He will have no one saved by compulsion." He therefore rejects the doctrines of original sin, the un-free will, predestination, election, and eternal damnation. Sin springs from self-will, and man has the power to fight and resist this self-will and make himself like Christ in His harmony with God's will. Thus the Spirit of God or of Christ lives in him, testifying of God, inspiring towards God all who will only see by it, learn from it, let it do its work within them, and make their wills one with God's.

The fruit of this God-inspired harmony is love, and this love grows by the imitation of Christ, who has manifested the divine love in its completeness by His life and suffering, and with whom we are to suffer, rather than rely on the doctrine of His suffering for us. Faith is not, as with Luther, the appropriation of Christ's imputed righteousness in place of our own. It is rather the obedient surrender of self to Him in the Christ-like life of love, which frees from the power of sin and makes it possible to fulfil the law in following Christ's example. " Christ has fulfilled the law, not to free us from it, but to show us by His example how to obey it." It is essentially an ethical experience. To depend on Christ's merits and imputed righteousness for salvation is of no avail unless it involves the transformation of the old fleshly life in accordance with His example. We cannot be accounted righteous unless we *are* righteous. We must be ethically like Christ. Otherwise He can be no means of salvation for us. All other expedients, even baptism, apart from the ethical realities, are mere superstitions. " All externals must yield to love, for they are for the sake of love, and not love for the sake of them."

In this ethical assimilation of the Gospel, rather than in the doctrine of justification by faith, lies for Denck the kernel of Christianity, and this Christianity is by no means identical with either the anthropology or the soteriology of the reformers. Along with these, he seems to have rejected their Christology, though not so openly as his associate Haetzer, who is said to have roundly denied the doctrine of the Trinity.[22]

It was in the course of his wanderings as the teacher of this subjective Gospel that he came to Augsburg, and it was at Augsburg that he adopted, in addition, the doctrine of adult baptism, though he does not seem to have laid the same stress as Hubmaier on the rite. He became, however, one of the most effective leaders of the movement, the dissenting tendency of which accorded with his own somewhat doctrinaire temperament—" its leader and missioner " as Franck calls him. He contributed not a little to organise it by means of conferences at Augsburg in 1526 and 1527 of delegates from South Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Styria into a cohesive brotherhood, with office-bearers—pastors, elders, and deacons—for each community, a superintendent for each district, and Councils or Synods composed of delegates of the respective districts.[23] From Augsburg he was driven once more into exile to Strassburg, where for a time he gained the sympathy of Capito, if not of Bucer. From Strassburg he was forced to migrate to Worms, and thence, after a second visit to Augsburg, where he presided over the second Anabaptist Synod in 1527, to Basle, where he ended his prematurely worn-out life under the kindly protection of the liberal Oecolampadius (27th November 1527). In his last days he appears to have repudiated the doctrine of adult baptism and to have become alienated from a movement which had begun to take a more aggressive form under leaders like Hans Hut.[24]

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[22] The additional charge of immorality, which was made against Haetzer, seems to be a slander. See Vedder, " Hubmaier," 21-22.

[23] Lindsay, " History of the Reformation," ii. 434-435.

[24] On Denck, see Heberle, " Joh. Denk," " Theol. Studien und Kritiken " (1851 and 1855); Keller, " Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer " (1882); Kolde, " Kirchengeschichtliche Studien," 231 f. (1888); Beard,

In their dissatisfaction with the old religion, as represented by the mediæval Church, and the new, as represented by the reformers, the Anabaptists were all of one type. There appear, however, varieties of this type during 1524-35, when the movement culminated in the revolutionary drama at Münster. The saner sort, to whom the original Zürich leaders, Hubmaier and Denck, belonged, preached a moderate communism in the sense that the baptized believer should hold his property at the service of his needy brethren, emphasised, like Luther, the doctrine of non-resistance to the powers that be and the obligation of suffering violence without demur, went beyond him in debarring the Christian from bearing arms and taking part in war, and objected to the use of oaths and the payment of tithes. To this better element Sebastian Franck pays a well-merited tribute: "They taught nothing but love, faith, and the Cross, showed themselves patient and humble in suffering, helped one another with kindly solicitude in lending, borrowing, and giving, taught that all things should be held in common, and addressed each other as brethren."[25]

The movement erelong, however, produced a more fanatic section, which seems to have been influenced by the teaching of Münzer and taught an out and out communism, believed in the immediate advent of Christ and the establishment of the reign of the saints, and advocated the destruction of the ungodly in order to hasten its realisation. One of the most notable of these fanatics was Hans Hut, who had been a follower of Münzer, had been present at the battle of Frankenhausen, and had thereafter joined the Anabaptists at Augsburg, where he was baptized by Denck. He next appears at Nikolsburg as a preacher of the speedy and violent regeneration of the world and the advent of Christ to rule over it. He predicted this event for the middle of May 1527, and when this prediction proved false,

"The Reformation," 204-212 (1883); Jones, "Spiritual Reformers of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," 16 f. (1914); Coutts, "The Reformation and the Religion of the Spirit" (1927, Edinburgh Univ. Thesis), the best account in English.

[25] "Chronica," 193. Arnold also praises their practical Christian spirit, "Kirchen und Ketzerhistorie," i., Pt. II., 262 f. (1700).

postponed it for two years, till Whitsunday 1529, when the true Christians should rise and slay the wicked wholesale, especially princes, priests, and nobles. These fantastic and fierce vapourings brought him into conflict with Hubmaier, who had secured the patronage and sympathy of the Lords of Lichtenstein and other nobles, and who maintained the lawfulness of the secular power and the duty of paying taxes in support of it, and opposed the extravagant communism of the extremists. This he did not only in a public disputation, but in a tract, "On the Sword," [26] which is an eminently temperate and reasonable statement of the case for the rights of the secular authority. The result was that Hut was imprisoned in the castle of Nikolsburg, from which he escaped, to pay the penalty with his life shortly after for his fanatic preaching. The chiliastic fanaticism which he had propagated in Moravia seems to have subsided, though the communist party, which found a leader in Widemann and an organiser in Jacob Huter of Tyrol, continued to exist in a number of prosperous communities which held everything in common, lived a common life, and carried their interference with personal liberty the length of maintaining a harsh tyranny over their members, until they were broken up and driven away by the persecuting edict of King Ferdinand in 1535.[27]

Whilst Hubmaier had been winning converts by the thousand in Moravia, and Huter and Blaurock had been labouring with equal effect in the Tyrol, the movement had been rapidly spreading in western Germany and the Netherlands. Its diffusion in these regions owed much to the activity of Melchior Hoffmann, a native of Hall, in Suabia, and a furrier to trade, who, unlike Hubmaier and Denck, had no university training and acquired his theology from an ardent study of the vernacular Bible. This theology was of a markedly chiliastic stamp, for Hoffmann had a predilection for Biblical eschatology, and in his sermons indulged much in prophecy about the end of the world and the new order of things which Christ was about to establish. He wandered to Livonia, Sweden, and Denmark, preaching and being persecuted from place to place, until he established himself, with the sanction of King Frederick I. of Denmark, at Kiel in 1527. A dispute with Bugenhagen over the Eucharist, of which he held the Zwinglian view, resulted in his banishment in 1529, along with Carlstadt, whom he had summoned to his assistance.[28] As a Zwinglian in the matter of the Lord's Supper he was welcomed at Strassburg, whither he now wandered. But his cast of thought was too Anabaptist to secure the approval of the Strassburg theologians, who had already been troubled by the teaching of Denck, Haetzer, Reubli, and he ended by going over to the Anabaptists and becoming apostle of the movement in the region along the Rhine, especially Friesland and Holland, where he is found proselytising during the next couple of years, his followers being known as Melchiorites. The persecution of his Netherland followers seems now to have imparted a more aggressive spirit to his chiliastic dreams, in which he emphasised the speedy destruction of the wicked and the establishment of the New Jerusalem at Strassburg, without, however, inciting his followers, who were to be ready for the great day of Christ's advent, to actual violence. The Strassburg Council put an end to his delusive preaching and career as a prophet by throwing him into prison in 1533—the year in which he had fixed the end of the world—and in prison he remained till his death, ten years later. He had, however, by this time a large following from Strassburg to the mouth of the Rhine, and his place as prophet was taken by Jan Matthys or Mathieson, who did not hesitate to put in execution at Münster the divine revolution which he had predicted, but had refrained from actually attempting to realise.[29]

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[26] In Vedder, appendix to his biography of Hubmaier.

[27] Vedder, "Hubmaier," 248-264.

For this aggressive chiliasm the persecution of the Anabaptists was, to a large extent, responsible. It had struck down the moderate as well as the more extreme of its early leaders, and executed, often with barbarous tortures, many of their followers. Catholics and Protestants, who agreed in little else, joined in this persecution, as the deliverance of the Diet of Spires reminds us. Ferdinand had already anticipated the Diet by fulminating several imperial mandates against them, to which many fell victims in the Austrian territories, in Salzburg, Bavaria, and other Romanist regions. In addition to Ferdinand, Duke William of Bavaria especially signalised his ferocity as a persecutor. "Those who recant, behead," ordered he ; "those who will not, burn." These victims already totalled two thousand by the year 1531, and the unflinching heroism and meekness with which they suffered torture and death excited the admiration of eye-witnesses, who have recorded their impressions of these revolting scenes. The Anabaptist martyrology, even in these earlier years, far exceeded that of the Protestants, since, unlike them, they had no adherents and protectors among the rulers of this world.[30] They were treated as rebels and anarchists even before the Münster outbreak, and persecuted and slaughtered in the interest of political and social order as well as of religion. The remembrance of the peasant insurrection intensified the brutality of their repression, and it must be admitted that the fanatic tone of the extremists, who refused to recognise the established order in the State as well as in the Church, and preached its forcible suppression, afforded no little provocation to treat them as rebels and anarchists. At the same time, there was no attempt to discriminate between extremists and moderates, or to distinguish between calumny and facts, and to the orthodox Protestant as well as to the orthodox Catholic their tenets were alike worthy of death. There was indeed, at first, on the part of the Protestants, a disposition to reason with and persuade them by means of disputations or controversial tracts[31] of the error of their views. But ultimately the Protestants belied their own principle of religious freedom and met their conscientious objections to conformity with the death penalty, though the persecution was far less severe in Protestant than in Romanist regions, and the Landgrave Philip and his theological adviser, Bucer, distinguished themselves by their comparative moderation.

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[28] Barge, "Carlstadt," ii. 395.

[29] On Hoffmann, see Zur Linden, "Melchior Hoffmann" (1885).

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[30] A full account of them was composed by a Dutch Baptist, Jan van Braght, and published in 1560, and in an English trans. by the Hanserd-Knollys Soc., ed. by Underhill (1850).

[31] See those of Melanchthon, for instance, in "Corp. Ref.," i. 931-933 and 956 f., with which we shall deal later.

II. THE MÜNSTER MADNESS

The persecution to which they were subjected inevitably aggravated the religious mania which had manifested itself, almost from the beginning, in those who insisted on literally understanding and applying Bible texts which took their fancy. This ridiculous literalism led some to behave in a childish fashion in obedience to the precept to be as little children, to give way to sensuality in honour of the text that the flesh profiteth nothing, to forsake wife and children in deference to the command to leave all and follow Christ, to harangue from the roofs of houses in virtue of the command to preach from the housetops, to quarrel among themselves and split up into various sects in consequence of the disposition to emphasise one text at the expense of ignoring others. The senseless and outrageous persecution of all and sundry, by intensifying the religious ferment, only added to the number of these maniacs and eccentrics. It nurtured, too, the conviction of the godlessness of the world and the imperative obligation of forcibly putting an end to the infernal régime of its tyrants and substituting for it the millennial kingdom of God. Of this kingdom, the divinely appointed founder seemed at last to be forthcoming in Jan Matthys, one of Hoffmann's Dutch converts. Matthys saw in Münster, the capital of the great mediæval bishopric, its providential centre, which Rothmann, the radical preacher, with the help of the discontented craft-guilds under Knipperdolling, a wealthy burgher with democratic sympathies, had won over to the Reformation after several years' struggle with the bishop (1529-33). Rothmann shortly after turned Anabaptist, and as a result of renewed conflict with the town council, and again with the aid of the town democracy, which he assiduously cultivated, succeeded in establishing an Anabaptist supremacy under the protection of a new council, with Knipperdolling as one of the two burgomasters (23rd February 1534). His success was due to the co-operation not only of the influential Knipperdolling, but of Matthys and his disciple, Jan Bockelson, who, shortly before this decisive triumph, had hied from the Netherlands to Münster, as the promised New Jerusalem. Unlike Rothmann, who was a graduate of the University of Maintz, Matthys, the master-baker of Haarlem, was a man of limited education. But he was strong-willed and energetic, had a fanatic belief in his own vocation as a prophet, made many proselytes through the missionaries whom he sent throughout the Netherlands and North-West Germany, and was prepared to put his apocalyptic visions into practice without further procrastination. In Jan Bockelson, who had begun life as a tailor at Leyden—Jan of Leyden is his usual designation—he had gained a very effective lieutenant. Bockelson had acquired some training in oratory and literary composition as a member of a literary society (Rede Rijker), had travelled a good deal and spent some time in London in pursuit of his handicraft, had established a business of his own at Leyden, had become bankrupt, and had then thrown himself into the Anabaptist propaganda, for which his handsome presence, insinuating manner, and ready tongue especially fitted him.

Under their auspices the work of inaugurating the kingdom of God in the New Jerusalem at Münster, to which contingents of Anabaptists had flocked from the Netherlands and neighbouring regions, was vigorously prosecuted. The churches were sacked and their literary and art treasures destroyed. Death was decreed to the godless who should refuse rebaptism—a penalty for which Knipperdolling managed to substitute banishment—and all such, including the aged and even the sick, were relentlessly driven out, whilst the others were marched to the market-place and baptized *en masse* by pouring water three times over their heads. The property of the banished was confiscated for the common good, and the citizens were required to contribute in money or kind to the sustenance of the numerous refugees. Those who demurred were compelled to acquiesce by a threat of outlawry. Terror, in fact, reigned in the New Jerusalem, and a foolhardy smith who dared to criticise the prophetic Matthys, was done to death, Matthys and Bockelson themselves summarily despatching him.

Thus far had the New Jerusalem taken shape when Matthys was struck down, in April 1534, during a sortie against the army of the bishop, who by this time was beleaguering the town. The transformation was continued by Bockelson, who mingled not a little of the old Adam with his fanaticism and made the New Jerusalem a travesty of both religion and morality. Whilst Matthys seems to have been sincere in his religious foolery, Bockelson was more rogue than fool in his ambition to become the ruler of the New Jerusalem and his eagerness to gratify his sensual instincts. To this end a divine revelation was duly forthcoming, directing a new constitution, which placed the New Israel under the régime of twelve elders and regulated its government. Another directed the institution of polygamy, of which the saints, from Bockelson downwards, took ample advantage, though no indulgence outside the marriage tie was allowed, and adultery was strictly prohibited. The prophet, for instance, took unto himself fifteen wives, including Matthys' beautiful widow and Knipperdolling's daughter. The huge proportion of the female over the male inhabitants, the example of the patriarchs, and the passion of Bockelson for Matthys' widow, together explain this objectionable development. The result was a domestic inferno, in many cases leading to divorce, and a sensuality which it is not pleasant to contemplate in those professing to live as the Spirit of God directed them.

At length, after a successful repulse of the besiegers by Bockelson on 15th May 1534, came another revelation directing that he should be crowned king over the whole earth, and the former tailor, nothing loth, had himself dressed up, with a tailor's eye to vestiarial effect, in all the paraphernalia of royalty, with Matthys' widow as queen, and a gorgeous retinue of ministers, counsellors, and courtiers. This farce he continued to act with due solemnity and with the aid of frequent revelations to meet an emergency, and there appears to have been no one left in Münster with humour enough to be conscious of the comedy, or at least with courage enough to laugh at it. To do so was in the highest degree dangerous. To attempt opposition unsuccessfully was to be sent to instant execution, as happened to the master-smith, Möllenbecke, and his associates, whose revolt miscarried. Famine, however, at length threatened to put an end to the rule of Jan and the saints, who strove to fortify their prediction of the coming conquest of the world by frequently feasting and amusing their dupes to the best of their ability. Life in the New Jerusalem was by no means puritanic, but with the tightening of the siege and the exhausting of the means of sustenance, the ingenuity and the faith of King Jan and his council were unequal to the task of keeping the wolf from the door. The saints were, erelong, fain to feed on horses, dogs, cats, rats, mice, and even old leather, in spite of the device of allowing a portion of the inhabitants, especially women and children, to leave the city. The besiegers killed the men capable of bearing arms, and after vainly trying to drive the others back to the city, distributed them among the various towns of the bishopric. The executioner was kept busy repressing the rising discontent which starvation produced. The fanatics, who had heroically repelled another assault at the end of August 1534, nevertheless persevered in the delusive hope of relief by their co-religionists and sympathisers in North Germany and elsewhere, among whom their emissaries were busy. They were at last undone by a couple of traitors, who revealed to the besiegers the weakest part of the defences and guided them into the doomed town (25th June 1535). The defenders sold their lives dearly, but weight of numbers, after fierce fighting in the streets and market-place and much slaughter on both sides, at length put an end to Jan's melodramatic sovereignty amid the horrible massacre with which the bishop followed up his success. Rothmann seems to have fallen in the fighting. Bockelson, Knipperdolling, and Krechting, another of the leaders, who were taken alive, after being exhibited in cages in the towns of the neighbourhood, were barbarously tortured to death in the market-place of Münster in January 1536. This misguided and crazy régime certainly provoked its own doom, though we must beware of believing all the calumnies circulated against them, and cannot but admire the heroism with which these fanatics and their dupes held their ground for more than a year against their enemies, and repeatedly repulsed their assaults. The brutality of their repression is still more revolting than the extravagances to which their fanaticism led.[1]

Unfortunately this fanaticism involved the adherents of the Anabaptist movement in an access of brutal persecution all over the empire and in the Netherlands, though in the Netherlands they had made themselves liable to such persecution by their violent spirit—the natural result of the revolting treatment meted out to them in virtue of the imperial edicts. In Moravia and the Tyrol this persecution, which found its instigator once more in King Ferdinand and could not fairly adduce in excuse the pretext of actual anarchy, was especially severe. The Moravian Anabaptists were driven from their homes into mountain and forest wilds. In the protest drawn up by them against their oppressors we see the better side of the movement, which was still represented by these exiled communities, and it is a relief to be able to contrast this better side with the travesty of it at Münster.

"We believe in Almighty God and in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will protect us henceforth and for ever in every peril, and to whom we have devoted our entire selves, our life and all that we possess, to keep His commandments and to forsake all unrighteousness and sin. Therefore we are persecuted and despised by the whole world and robbed of all our property, as was done aforetime to the holy prophets and even to Christ Himself. By King Ferdinand, the Prince of Darkness, that cruel tyrant and enemy of divine truth and righteousness, many of our brethren have been slaughtered and put to death without mercy, our property seized, our fields and houses laid waste, and ourselves driven into exile and most fearfully persecuted. . . . We have injured no one, we have occupied ourselves in heavy toil, which all men can testify. Notwithstanding, we are driven by force from our possessions and houses. We are now in the desert, in woods, and under the open canopy of heaven; but this we patiently endure, and praise God that we are counted worthy to suffer for His Name. . . . We desire to molest no one, not to prejudice our foes, not even King Ferdinand. Our manner of life, our customs and conversation are known everywhere to all. Rather than wrong a single man of a penny, we would suffer the loss of a hundred gulden, and sooner than strike our enemy with the hand, much less with the spear, or the sword, or the halberd, as the world does, we would die and surrender life. We carry no weapon, neither spear nor gun, as is clear as the open day, and they that say that we have gone forth by thousands to fight, lie, and impiously traduce us to our rulers."[2]

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[1] On the movement at Münster, see Heath, "Anabaptism" (1895); Newman, "History of Anti-Pedobaptism" (1897); Tumbült, "Die Wiedertäufer" (1899); Bax, "Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists" (1903); Detmer, "Bernhard Rothmann" (1904); Geisberg, "Die Münsterischen Wiedertäufer" (1907); Lindsay, "History of the Reformation," ii. 451 f. (1908), contains some chronological errors.

After the catastrophe of Münster, Anabaptism of the extreme type happily shed the reprehensible features which persecution had nurtured. Its reformation was due to David Joris, and especially to Menno Simons, a Friesland priest, who definitely joined the movement in 1536 and laboured successfully to restore to it its original religious character. As thus purified, it had a great future before it, in spite of continued persecution, especially in England, where Anabaptism had already, in the reign of Henry VIII., not a few adherents, and where in the beginning of the seventeenth century it took a fresh departure at the hands of John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, who, during their exile in Holland, were influenced by the Mennonite Church.[3] Whilst the movement dwindled into insignificance on the Continent, the strength of the Baptist Church to-day in Britain, the British Dominions, and the United States, bears witness to its vitality and its potency as a religious and even a political force. In view of this development it would indeed be short-sighted to take the reformers' estimate of the Anabaptists and exclude them from the great Reformation movement as the enemies both of religion and of society.

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[2] "The Anabaptist Martyrology," in Hanserd-Knollys Soc., i. 149-153; Vedder, "Hubmaier," 269-274.

[3] See for the early English Anabaptists, Jones, "Studies in Mystical Religion," 396 f. (1909). For a convincing proof of the moderate and truly Christian spirit of their religious convictions, see "A Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations or Churches of Christ in London which are commonly (but unjustifiably) called Anabaptists" (1644), especially sections 48-51 on the Civil Magistrate. They differ from their fellow-Christians of the time only in stressing adult baptism by immersion.

Prejudice, policy, and calumny made the most of their extravagances in order to prove this conclusion, and long persisted in distorting their real history. But, with all these extravagances, they were equally with Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin the exponents of a reaction from a secularised and corrupt Christianity, and the better type of them at least were nearer, in some essential respects, to the original than any of the varieties to which the leading reformers gave their names. This sort amply proved by their devoted lives and heroic deaths that they had got hold of verities which might be hidden from the wise and prudent type of reformer, but were grasped and fearlessly exemplified by these simple, if eccentric and opinionated, Christians. This type of reformer was fain, on occasion, from reasons of expediency, not only to swerve from principles, such as that of the priesthood of believers and the right of private judgment, which the Anabaptists only carried to their logical conclusion, but to condemn and persecute those who refused to do likewise. It is in their violently intolerant attitude to the Anabaptists that we realise how imperfectly their Protestant persecutors had in this respect emancipated themselves from the mediæval spirit and methods.

III. LUTHER AND THE ANABAPTISTS

Luther's conflict with Carlstadt, Münzer, and the prophets contributed to influence his attitude towards the movement. His opposition to it was, in fact, a continuation of this conflict. He first announced his intention of writing against the Anabaptists in a letter to Link[1] on the 29th

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[1] Enders, vi. 165.

December 1527, and this intention he forthwith carried out in a missive "Concerning Anabaptism," addressed to two clerics who lived in a Romanist region in which the sectaries were being severely persecuted (exactly where, does not appear[2]), and who had asked his opinion on the subject. On his own avowal the "new sect," as he calls them, had made astounding progress during the previous two years. "The Anabaptists," he informs Spalatin on the 28th December, "are reputed to be increasing and to be scattered throughout every region."[3] "The new sect," he tells Jacob Probst, on the 31st, "increases marvellously in consequence of the great show of activity on the part of the living and the boldness of its martyrs in suffering death by fire and water."[4] The cruel repression of the Peasant Rising had evidently disposed the common man, in his revulsion from Luther, to welcome the message of these ubiquitous preachers of a more popular faith as the true interpreters of this primitive Gospel. For this reason, and in view of the fact that Hubmaier in one of his works had quoted him in confirmation of the new teaching, he has been compelled to join issue with them, if only to clear himself of such an imputation.[5] He admits that he is not quite clear as to the teaching of the sectaries, since in Saxony, thank God, it has so far not found a footing.[6] He had, however, as his polemic shows, learned by report a good deal about them, and he is convinced, far too hastily it is evident, that the devil is at the bottom of the movement. His tone is anything but judicial, though his dialectic is, on the whole, both nimble and resourceful, and as usual in the case of obnoxious opponents, he sees the cloven hoof behind these radical theologians. In this spirit he proceeds to controvert their extreme radical tendency at the risk of being himself accused of having become a papist. He accordingly appears at the outset in the strange rôle of apologist of the Papacy as against their extreme radicalism, and champions the legitimacy of historic Christianity against their appeal to the Scripture, Anabaptistically interpreted. In their radical onslaught on the papal Antichrist, they have reduced the temple of God itself, in which Antichrist sits, to ruins.[7] In regard, in particular, to the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, they have not been content to do away, as he himself has done, with the abuse of these sacraments. They have altogether nullified them. He objects especially to their contention that the efficacy of baptism depends on the faith of the baptized person, and that, therefore, infant baptism is not only unscriptural, but wholly inefficacious. Nor will he admit that, as practised in the Church, it is a mere human invention without the saving efficacy which faith alone can impart, or that it is a bad example of the principle of believing man rather than God, against which he had so insistently protested in disproof of the papal claims, for instance.

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[2] Probably Bavaria or Austria. On the 5th Feb. 1528 he sends a copy of it to Spalatin, Enders, vi. 204.

[3] Enders, vi. 161.

[4] *Ibid.*, vi. 169.

[5] "Werke," 26, 255-256 (Erlangen ed.); xxvi. 144-145 (Weimar ed.).

[6] *Ibid.*, 26, 255; xxvi. 145.

In controversy with the Romanists he had, indeed, stressed faith in God's Word and promise, of which the sacraments are the sign and seal, as the important thing, in opposition to the priestly *ex opere operato* conception of the mediæval Church. At the same time, he had retained in a modified form the belief in their objective validity as the divinely instituted media of God's grace, and in the controversy with the prophets and the Sacramentarians, he had tended to accentuate the objective aspect as against the subjectivism of his more radical opponents, whilst also emphasising the necessity of faith for their effective reception. In the polemic against the Anabaptists the objective note has become the dominant one, whilst the necessity of faith is generally admitted. In his reactionary revulsion from their extreme subjectivism, he almost at times seems to resile from his cardinal doctrine of faith as the fundamental principle of the religious life. At all events, it is rather singular to find him belittling this principle as interpreted by his opponents, who claim to be carrying his teaching to its logical issue. On the other hand, it is only fair to remember that however much he might exalt individual faith in relation to God, the Word was for him the supreme power as well as the supreme authority in religion, and that faith is only the medium by which the Word of God works in the heart of the believer.

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[7] "Werke," 26, 256 f.; xxvi. 146 f.

Baptism as practised in the Church has, he insists, not been perverted into a mere human institution like the Papacy, which has no foundation in Scripture. It was duly ordained by God as a sign and seal of the new covenant, just as circumcision was instituted as a sign and seal of the covenant with Abraham and his seed. Its validity does not, therefore, depend on the faith of the recipient, but on the fact of its divine institution—on God's own Word and injunction. But what, demand the Anabaptists, of the text, " He that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved ? " Does not this text necessitate the baptism only of adults, who alone are capable of faith ? Luther denies that the mere profession of faith is a sufficient guarantee of the reality of faith. Profession by no means ensures possession. God alone knows the heart, and in adult baptism you can never be sure of the faith of another person, even if you baptize him a hundred times over. The Word of God alone is the only sure foundation of baptism, since the truth of the Word does not depend on so uncertain a thing as faith, but on God Himself who cannot deceive or be deceived. Moreover, the text does not prove, as the Anabaptists maintain, that the baptism of infants is inadmissible on the ground that infants are incapable of faith. What right have you to infer, or how can you know for certain, that infants are incapable of faith ? Faith does not necessarily depend on the intelligence of the believer. Luther, as usual, when faced with the difficulty of reconciling faith with reason, boldly talks reason out of court. It might, indeed, be sufficiently evident, from the rational point of view, that infants cannot exercise the rational faculty, which alone can apprehend the significance of such a rite. But for him such rational considerations do not apply in the religious sphere, and he boldly appeals to revelation as against reason in this matter. Christ Himself is present in baptism to beget faith in the heart of the infant, just as He was present in the Baptist even in the womb of his mother Elizabeth. But apart from the question of the possibility of faith in the infant heart, did He not command to bring the little children to Him and proclaim that of such is the kingdom of Heaven? Did He, in directing His disciples to teach and baptize all nations, except the children and not rather include them in their mission, and did not the apostles, in baptizing whole households, without distinction of young and old, thus interpret His command? The practice of infant baptism is thus justified by the example of the apostles themselves, acting in obedience to Christ's injunction. We cannot, indeed, point to any text of Scripture expressly enjoining infant baptism. But neither can the Anabaptists adduce any passage expressly limiting baptism to adults, whilst the practice of Scripture undoubtedly warrants the baptism of both young and old. Even granting that children only come to the experience of faith years after their baptism, what necessity is there for renewing an ordinance which has already been rightly performed and which the subsequent faith of the believer has brought to full fruition? On the other hand, if an adult person falls from faith into sin, must we not, on the Anabaptist theory, baptize him anew every time he does so? And since every Christian thus falls into sin over and over again, shall we not have our hands full every day rebaptizing these peccable Christians? In short, just as the abuse of a thing does not nullify the thing itself, so the abuse of baptism does not nullify the rite itself. Gold does not become straw because a thief steals it and puts it to a wrong use.

Worst of all, in magnifying rebaptism, these sectaries have fallen back into the Romanist religion of works. Whilst stressing faith, they belie it by their insistence on the necessity of an external rite to salvation, which depends not on works, but solely on grace. Like the Galatians of Paul's time they have fallen away from the righteousness of faith to the righteousness of works. "What shall I say? We Germans are thorough Galatians and remain Galatians. For he who gets himself rebaptized revokes in reality his previous faith and righteousness and reduces them to sin and condemnation. This is horrible, and exactly accords with the saying of St Paul that the Galatians have fallen away from Christ in receiving circumcision, which profits nothing, and, in seeking to be justified by the law and its works, have severed themselves from Him and fallen away from grace." [8] This is the latest masterpiece of the devil, who has hit on this device to discredit and subvert Luther's evangelical teaching. The fruits of this diabolic trick are only too patent in the conduct of these misguided people who, in their crazy zeal for their silly fancies, abandon wife and children, refuse obedience to civil government, etc., in flat contradiction of the teaching of Scripture, which they ridiculously misinterpret by their insistence on the letter at the expense of the Spirit. They are, too, on a par with the Donatists in cherishing the false notion that the validity of the sacraments depends on the moral character of the priest. It depends, he reiterates, not on the faith or the character of anyone, but on the ordinance of God, which, once fulfilled, is not to be repeated at the arbitrary will of the individual, nor to be overturned without the express and incontestable testimony of Scripture. What folly and audacity to assume that for more than 1,000 years, during which infant baptism has been the universal practice, the Church has been given over to a delusion, and that so many generations of Christians, including ever so many saints, have been really without the blessing of baptism! In daring to maintain such an unheard of assumption, the Anabaptists are a set of crazy innovators. They are, moreover, as cruel as they are crazy, in denying to infants the benefit of God's ordinance, and will surely incur the guilt of the damnation of these innocents who die unbaptized, and to whom they refuse this benefit. Only the gullibility of the masses, who are ever too prone to swallow such devil's blasphemies, can account for the rapid spread of the movement. The fact that, in addition, they hold with the Sacramentarians the symbolic view of the Lord's Supper only augments the heinousness of their doctrine in Luther's eyes.[9]

Whilst thus giving expression to his whole-hearted detestation, on theological grounds, of their teaching, he emphatically proclaims his disapproval of their brutal treatment in Romanist territories. His noble protest on their behalf is all the more creditable inasmuch as his judgment is at times rather warped by theological prejudice. "It is not right, and it fills me with pity, that such wretched people are so murdered, miserably burned, and cruelly done to death. Every one ought to be allowed to believe what he will. If his belief is wrong, he will suffer punishment enough in the eternal fire of hell. Why will men persist in martyring such people in this life as long as they err only in matters of faith and do not, in addition, preach rebellion or otherwise resist the civil power? Good God! How easy it is to err and fall into the snares of the devil! With the Scripture, the Word of God alone, we should oppose and resist the erring. With fire we can effect little."[10] "I am very loth to adopt the sentence of blood even when it is abundantly deserved," he wrote six months later (14th July 1528) to Link, who had asked him whether the civil power was entitled to punish false prophets with death.[11] "In this matter the force of example terrifies me. For we see, in the case of the papists and of the Jews before Christ, how, when it had once been decreed to put false prophets and heretics to death, it gradually came about that only the most saintly prophets and the innocent were killed under the authority of this statute, which wicked magistrates made a pretext for persecuting as false prophets and heretics whomsoever they pleased. I fear that the same evil consequences will recur among us if, having approved of the infliction of the death penalty in a single instance, it will become a maxim that false teachers ought to be put to death. This has been only too sadly illustrated in the case of the papists, who, by the abuse of this law, have shed so much innocent blood under the pretext of punishing the evil-doer. Wherefore I can in no wise admit that false teachers are to be put to death. It is sufficient to banish them. If posterity should abuse this form of punishment, their error will be less grave, and they will only harm themselves."[12] The moderation of this judgment is all the more commendable inasmuch as he could see in the constancy of the Anabaptist martyrs only a species of madness, due to satanic inspiration and comparable to the fanaticism of the ancient Donatists in their struggle with the Catholics in the fourth century, and the Jews in their war against the Romans. Only Lutherans, it seems, could be true martyrs.[13]

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[8] "Werke," 26, 279; xxvi. 162.

[9] *Ibid.*, 26, 293-294; xxvi. 173.

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[10] "Werke," 26, 256; xxvi. 145-146.

[11] In reference particularly to the Imperial Edict of 4th Jan. 1528, and that of the Swabian League, 16th Feb.

A year later Luther's attitude towards the sectaries has undergone a change. He is no longer prepared to tolerate Anabaptist error. In 1527-28 he is still the spectator of a distant movement which has not yet obtained a foothold in Saxony. Before long it had stolen into the stronghold of Lutheranism itself and had begun to attract the attention of the electoral officials, especially of Justus Menius, superintendent of Eisenach, and Eberhard von der Thann, governor of the Wartburg.[14] Early in 1530 Menius and Myconius wrote on the subject to Luther, who in reply urged them to hurry on the completion of the work against them, which they had planned in concert.[15] "I am very pleased with the outline of your projected work against the Anabaptists, which I hope will be published as soon as possible. As they are not only blasphemous, but highly seditious, urge the use of the sword against them by right of law. For it is in accordance with the will of God that he should incur punishment who resists the civil power as the minister of God (Romans xiii. 1-3). We may not, therefore, mete out better treatment to these men than God Himself and all the saints."[16] He was now so keen to join in the hunt against these interlopers in his own vineyard that he wrote a preface to the work. What especially excites his abhorrence is their audacity in taking upon themselves, under the inspiration of the devil, the preaching office without a regular call to the ministry, and their surreptitious propaganda on behalf of their revolutionary, apocalyptic fancies among the common people, whom they strive to stir up against the Lutheran clergy.[17]

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[12] Enders, vi. 299.

[13] *Ibid.*, vi., 263. Letter to Link, 12th May 1528.

[14] For their presence in Saxony and Thuringia, see Introduction by Freitag and Brenner to Luther's missive against them, "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 511-513.

[15] It was, however, actually written by Menius, see "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 209.

[16] Enders, vii. 236-237. See also the letters to Thomas Löscher, pastor at Milau, *ibid.*, vii. 150-151; and to Jos. Levin Metsch, "Werke," 54, 97-98 (Erlangen ed.), 26th Aug. 1529; and his exposition of the 82nd Psalm, "Werke," 39, 250 f. (1530).

This is also the main contention of the missive "Concerning the Sneaks and Hedge-preachers," which he addressed to Von der Thann (January 1532).[18] Who has commissioned you to sneak about and preach? is the test he would apply to them. The very fact of their sneaking about among the common people in the fields and the forests is sufficient to prove that they are the devil's emissaries. The Holy Spirit is no sneak, but descends openly on the winds of heaven. If they were God's messengers they would first of all consult and prove their credentials to the pastors, to whom is committed the office of preaching the Word and administering the sacraments, instead of prowling about and stealthily alienating the people from them. In thus surreptitiously carrying on their nefarious propaganda, they are thieves and murderers of souls, enemies of Christ and His Church, and seditious disturbers of public order. It is, therefore, the duty of the authorities, both ecclesiastical and civil, to warn the people and require them under severe penalties to aid them in rooting these sneaking rascals out of the land.[19] Failing such prompt repression, they will utterly ruin Church and State. In justification of this procedure he goes on to show from Scripture that the ministerial function is an office which no one may exercise without a call. Witness the parables of the householder and the labourers, the Lord and His servants in Matthew's Gospel. He himself would never have had confidence and strength to declare the Word of God against the Romanists, but for the fact of his office as Doctor of Holy Scripture. But does not St Paul recognise the exercise of the gift of prophesying or preaching as the right of every member of the Christian community (1 Cor. xiv. 30), and do not the sectaries appeal to his authority in justification of their preaching? The prophets of the Pauline community, retorts Luther, rather hazardously, were the recognised teachers of the Church who were entrusted with the ministerial function, and St Paul does not, in this passage, authorise the common crowd to usurp the ministerial office. He forgets that some years before he had given a more liberal interpretation of the passage in his work on the ministry,[20] and he now rather arbitrarily wrests it into an argument against unauthorised lay preaching. Moreover, the emphasis on the official ministerial office, as against the sectaries, is hardly in keeping with the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers by which he had sought to overthrow the priestly hierarchy. He had, indeed, combined with this doctrine the institution of the ministry for the preaching of the Word and the dispensation of the sacraments, whilst stripping it of its priestly, indelible character, and recognising the right of the people to elect and even control its pastor. He had, too, habitually insisted on the necessity of a certain order in the reformed community, and limited the right of the individual in relation to the whole body of the members and its elected pastor. Innovators, like the prophets, must attest their doctrine by a clear divine call, or by an evident miracle, and are not at liberty to inflict their subjective fancies on the congregation and overthrow the regular order of things at will. He had thus in practice more or less qualified his doctrine of the priesthood of believers by considerations of expediency and by the conception of a duly called and equipped ministry of the Word and sacraments. Even if in theory the priesthood of believers entitled every believer to preach the Word, it was necessary to regulate this right, if only in the interest of order. His experience of the prophets and the Peasant Rising had strengthened this conviction, and with the Anabaptist movement at his own door, he will no longer admit any deviation from the established order, and regards the ordinary ministry as the exclusive exponents of the Word.

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[17] See the Preface in "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 209 f.; and Erlangen ed., 63, 290 f., wrongly given by Enders as 64, 290. See also Enders, vii. 293; Schmidt, "Justus Menius," i. 150 f. (1867).

[18] "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 518 f. Von den Schleichern und Winkelpredigern.

[19] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. III., 520. Solche buben helffen ausleuchten.

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[20] De instituendis Ministris Ecclesiæ, "Werke," xii. 190. Nam ubi id monstratum est evidenter habere unumquemque jus ministri verbi, imo præceptum si viderit vel deesse qui doceant, vel non recte docere, qui assunt, ut 1 Cor. 14, Paulus statuit, quo virtus dei annuncietur per nos omnes.

At the same time, it is questionable whether, in vindicating the established order from the New Testament, he was not unduly prejudiced by his antipathy to the sectaries. His diagnosis of the primitive Christian community can hardly be called historically minded. There was more force in the Anabaptist appeal to the practice of the primitive Church in defence of the right of unofficial preaching than he was willing to admit. His historic exegesis is more or less a piece of special pleading. He does not sufficiently realise the democratic side of the primitive community because he is up against a democratic religious movement which he detests, and has no real sympathy with democratic ideals and aspirations in either Church or State. His anti-democratic temperament and his realistic belief in the devil lead him to see in this appeal one more device of Satan to discredit the Gospel. He has become far too apt to allow this obsession to cloud his historic insight and take the place of solid argument, and he is naïvely unaware of the ludicrous character of this style of argument. His missive to Von der Thann is accordingly lacking in discrimination, common sense, and historic insight. If he could have preserved the open mind, he would have frankly admitted that the primitive community recognised as valid, and gave scope to, the gifts, the charismata of all its members, as long as these were exercised in decency and order. In the Pauline Epistles the members of the community, in virtue of the fact that each is, or may be, the organ of the Holy Spirit, exercise the gift of edification as well as other forms of service for the common benefit, and though the regular functionaries are to be honoured and obeyed, they have no monopoly of proclaiming the Word in virtue of their office. These sectaries might be wrong-headed and opinionated. A section of them, under stress of persecution, undoubtedly became violent visionaries, and in this respect gave Luther some provocation for regarding them as emissaries of Satan. But both in their propaganda and in their organised communities, the more moderate of them were certainly actuated by their striving to restore the spirit and practice of primitive Christianity in their own fashion. Whilst Luther rediscovered the Gospel mainly through Paul, they rediscovered it mainly through Jesus Himself. They appealed to His teaching as contained especially in the Sermon on the Mount, rather than to the Pauline doctrine of grace and works. Unlike Luther, they believed in free will and in a spiritual, as opposed to a dogmatic interpretation of Christianity. They conceived of the Church as the society of Christ's disciples on the primitive model, not in the more institutional sense to which Luther was now disposed to limit it, and they not inaptly quoted, in support of this conception, his doctrine of spiritual priesthood. In view of the undoubtedly Christian element in the movement, Luther would have done more service to the Reformation in striving to understand and come to a reasonable accommodation with it, instead of merely denouncing it and hounding on both clergy and State officials to hunt down the sectaries and inflict civil pains and penalties on them.

Unfortunately, too, he ignores the fact that this method has forced them to shun the open as much as possible. The surreptitious activity which he assigns solely to satanic inspiration was, in truth, the unavoidable result of the persecution to which they were exposed and which he himself at first emphatically condemned. His missive was in this respect lacking in logic as well as insight. He forgot, too, that the pretext of the danger to public order, which he continually stresses in his striving to discredit the movement, might become a terrible instrument of oppression in the hands of these petty rulers and their officials. The territorial ruler was practically absolute within his own dominions. He might adduce specious arguments from the law and the Constitution of the empire in justification of his own right to resist the Emperor. He was not so ready to recognise the right of the individual, on the strength of conscientious conviction, to resist his own oppressive rule, and Luther, in indiscriminately raising the cry of the State in danger, was only too plausibly abetting a princely tyranny over mind and conscience, as objectionable as that of Pope and priest, from which he had striven to deliver the individual as well as the Church.

In this missive he was apparently still content to punish these proselytisers with banishment. Shortly before its publication, however, he had, if reluctantly, expressed his approval, in a deliverance submitted by Melanchthon to the Elector, of the infliction of the death penalty (end of October 1531). "I, Luther, approve (*placet mihi Luthero*). Although it seems cruel to punish them with the sword, it is still more cruel to damn the ministry of the Word, to propagate false doctrine and spurn the true, and in addition to seek to overthrow the kingdoms of this world."[21]

Fully four years later (June 1536) he again joined Melanchthon and the other professors of the Wittenberg Theological Faculty in pronouncing in favour of the death penalty in punishment of the persistent profession of Anabaptist error. Like him, Melanchthon had at first been disposed to rely on argument with the sectaries, and had attempted to refute their objections to infant baptism and their views on civil government in a couple of controversial tracts, written in 1527 and 1528.[22] Though he shares Luther's detestation of their opinions, he writes in a more restrained and didactic tone. With the growth of the movement and the spread of the violent spirit, he came to share Luther's conviction that both were the work of the devil, pure and simple, and even outdid him in his demand for their forcible repression. "At first," he tells Myconius, "I was foolishly clement. But now (February 1531) I greatly repent of this clemency."[23] The magistrates should proceed against them with the greatest severity,[24] as subverters of the civil government and blasphemers. They should apply to them the law of Moses against blasphemy and treat them as the Roman Emperors treated the Arians and the Donatists. Brenz and other reformers are far too lenient in their ignorance of the evil contagion in these fanatics.[25] He continued to urge this bloodthirsty method in subsequent letters to Myconius[26] and to Bucer,[27] who was disposed to be more discriminating and charitable in his judgment. His zeal against them was intensified by the Münster outbreak and by an examination of a number of these sectaries, which he conducted for the enlightenment of the Elector John Frederick at Jena in December 1535, and Leuchtenburg in the beginning of 1536.[28] The prisoners at Jena—Heintz Krauth, Jobst Müller, and Hans Peissker—were simple rustics, who declared that they had no connection whatever with the Münster movement,[29] and were evidently not active revolutionaries. They acknowledged, in answer to Melanchthon's queries, belief in the Trinity, though confessing their incapacity to reason on such a high theme. They believed, too, in the forgiveness of sins, which involved simple trust in God's Word, perseverance in upright living, the doing of the Father's will, and the following of Christ's example. They believed farther in sharing their goods with their brethren, as did the Apostles. If they had a house full of gold, they would not call a single piece their own. Infant baptism they rejected because it is not enjoined in the New Testament, and is not necessary, since all children—Christian and pagan alike—are saved without it. "God is not such a God as would damn a little child for the sake of a drop of water, for all His creatures are good."[30] But, asked Melanchthon, are not all conceived in sin and all children of wrath? In reply, they cared not a farthing for all such passages, and adduced the saying of Christ, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." They alone understood the Scripture. Infants could not be guilty of original sin, since they had not consented to it, and only became conscious of sin when they grew up and felt its power. Asked whether he believed that children must be saved through Christ, Krauth answered in the affirmative, and when faced with the farther question whether, if they had no sin, they had no need of Christ's suffering, and whether he could prove this from Scripture, he retorted that what he believed he had learned from God, who had written it in his heart. The devil could also write. In regard to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the Lutheran belief in a Bread God was pure idolatry.

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[21] Schmidt, "Menius," i. 165; Paulus, "Protestantismus und Toleranz," 41 f. (1911).

[22] "Corp. Ref.," i. 931-933, and more at length, *ibid.*, i. 955 f.

[23] *Ibid.*, ii. 17.

[24] Summa severitate in cœrcendis hujusmodi spiritibus.

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[25] "Corp. Ref.," ii. 17-18.

[26] *Ibid.*, ii. 549, Oct. 1531.

[27] *Ibid.*, ii. 710-713, March 1534.

[28] *Ibid.*, ii. 997 f.; iii. 14 f. The investigation at Jena was made along with his colleague, Cruciger, who had sought with him a refuge here from the pest, and the pastor and the burgomaster of the town.

[29] *Ibid.*, ii. 998.

[30] *Ibid.*, ii. 999.

On the question of submission to the civil government, they could take no oaths, since this was contrary to the injunction to swear not at all. As Christians and brethren, argued Krauth, they had no need of the civil government, since Christ had made all His followers free. If, however, the civil power left them free to profess their faith, they were willing to do what was demanded of them, as far as material things were concerned. They did not make it a matter of conscience to refuse this obedience, nor did they condemn civil government, as far as it existed for the punishment of the wicked. In their brotherhood, which lived after the model of Christ, and which in religious matters was governed by their own ministers, there was really no need for the punitive exercise of its authority. They did not recognise it as a divine ordinance, on which Melanchthon laid stress, and objected to making an idol of it, and paying it the conventional external honour which was due to God alone. Confronted with scriptural texts relative to the subject, Krauth retorted that Magister Philip would kill more people with his dead texts than all the hangmen, and claimed the right to interpret the Old and New Testaments in the light of their own spiritual experience. They would not surrender their spiritual freedom merely at the behest of external authority, which had no right to dictate in matters of conscience. Asked why they preached in secret conventicles, and who had called them to the preaching office, Krauth, whilst denying the charge of secrecy, adduced the persecution on account of the Word of God to which they were subjected as a sufficient reason for their meeting together to hear it. The divine command and the approval of their brethren constituted a surer call than the sanction of the Government, of which they had no need. On the question of separation from an unbelieving wife, they denied that such a union was valid, in spite of the testimony of Paul, which they interpreted differently from Melanchthon, and claimed the right to dissolve the marriage bond on this ground, though Krauth was willing to exercise patience and prayer in the hope of bringing the unbeliever to share their faith.

In his report on the examination,[31] Melanchthon assures us that he and his colleague, Cruciger, had avoided subtle and entangling questions. Their only object was to establish what the sectaries actually believed, in order to guide the civil judges to a just verdict. There seems to be no doubt that they were anxious to be fair towards them. "We have in a friendly and Christian spirit prayed and exhorted them to suffer themselves to be instructed, and take into consideration the scriptural passages which we have put before them. We have pointed out that God would, in time, enlighten them, if they would set His Word before them and diligently reflect on it. But they say that they will abide by what God has taught them."[32] At the same time, he concludes that they are a perverse, opinionated, and ill-conditioned lot, and pronounces their opinions to be seditious, whilst leaving the question of penalty to the judges. It is only too evident that he allows his theological predilections to influence his judgment. Moreover, in a letter to the Elector John Frederick, on the 19th January 1536, he advocated the infliction of severe punishment.[33] They were accordingly found guilty of sedition and executed on the 27th.

It is, however, very doubtful whether, on the evidence of this investigation, they were really in intention or act seditious revolutionaries. They were apparently sincere in their profession of submission to the civil authority, so long as it did not infringe their rights as Christians and seek to force them to conform to the official religion against the dictates of conscience. With the exception of the claim to repudiate an unbelieving spouse, which certainly brought them within the scope of the law, they might have been

[31] "Corp. Ref." ii. 1003-1004.

[32] *Ibid.*, ii. 1004.

[33] *Ibid.*, iii. 16.

left to hold their rather crude opinions in peace, as far as any real danger to the State was concerned. In any case, there was nothing in these opinions to justify the infliction of the death penalty.

This was, however, the judgment which Melanchthon and his colleagues of the Wittenberg Theological Faculty set forth as a general deliverance in the following June. On the 24th of May the Landgrave Philip, who, on principle, had hitherto refrained from violent measures against them,[34] addressed to the theologians, including those of Wittenberg, a query on the subject. He asked what was to be done in the case of Anabaptists who, if he should banish them, should steal back, in spite of an undertaking not to return, and renew their stealthy propaganda among the people.[35] The Wittenberg theologians entrusted the task of drafting a reply to Melanchthon,[36] who explicitly writes with the example of Münster before his mind, and was not, therefore, disposed to err on the side of leniency. It is no part of the ministerial function, he premises, to repel error by the sword. The duty of ministers is to instruct the erring and fight against their error only with the Word. The question is whether the civil power may forbid and punish Anabaptist teaching, and this question he unhesitatingly answers in the affirmative, though he premises that the sectaries are first to be instructed in true doctrine and exhorted by the ministers to renounce their errors. Those who do so are to be pardoned. Those who persistently refuse are to be punished with the sword, on the double ground of sedition and blasphemy.

In support of the charge of sedition, he adduces their refusal to submit to civil government (in things religious he should have added), their communism, their objections to oaths, their infidelity to the marriage vow. Such views tend to the subversion of the State and society. It is of no avail to profess that they mean no harm to anyone, since their teaching must inevitably tend to anarchy. Nor is it legitimate to plead that matters of faith are no concern of the civil power. The Government does not punish on account of mere opinion, but on account of the effects of opinion in undermining all government. The devil is at work in the movement, however plausibly they may give themselves the airs of innocence and sanctity. They are a diabolic sect. The example of Münster is conclusive on this point.

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[34] For the attitude of the Landgrave and the Elector John Frederick towards them, see Wappler, "Die Stellung Kursachsens und des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen zur Tauferbewegung" (1910); Nik. Paulus, "Protestantismus und Toleranz im 16 Jahrhundert" (1911).

[35] Enders, x. 338.

[36] It is given in "Corp. Ref.," iii. 195 f. It is wrongly dated Dec. by the editor of the "Corpus." The correct date is 5th June, Enders, x. 347-348, who corrects the text.

In the second place, from the specific theological point of view, these opinions constitute blasphemy, and the Government is bound, also on this account, to punish these criminals. Old Testament texts, such as Lev. xxiv. 16, put this beyond doubt. Whilst the spheres of Church and State are distinct, the function of Government is not limited to the material welfare of the subject. It must, in obedience to the Word of God, suppress heresy and false worship, and maintain the true doctrine and worship as embodied in the Word and the early Church, and revived by the evangelical reformers. In this one-sided fashion he thus seeks to invalidate the Romanist arguments in favour of the suppression by the civil power, on the ground of blasphemy, of Lutheranism as well as Anabaptism. The teaching of the reformed theologians, being founded on the Word and the ancient Church, shall alone be upheld by the State, since neither mere custom, as in the case of the Romanists, nor false spiritualism, as in the case of the Anabaptists, has any claim to be the true religion.

In support of the charge of blasphemy, he enlarges on the theological errors of the Anabaptists and on their separatist tendency which, as in the case of the Donatists, is a grave danger to the State as well as the Church. Anabaptism was, in truth, threatening to become a serious rival to the Lutheran Church, and the deliverance is as much influenced by the apprehensions of the reformers on this score as by the fear of the general anarchy, of which the Münster episode had afforded a terrifying example.

In conclusion, whilst the trial of these misguided sectaries is to be conducted with moderation and discrimination, and leniency shown towards those who have been misled, the leaders and their obstinate followers are to be put to death. In a covering letter to the Landgrave, signed by Luther, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, and Cruciger, the theologians declare that, though they would fain avoid the shedding of blood, their judgment was sufficiently founded on Christian principles. In a postscript, Luther, whilst generally agreeing with the deliverance, added a word in favour of a discriminating clemency. "This is the general rule. Nevertheless, your Grace may always let mercy go hand in hand with justice, according to the particular case."[37] Even so, the document was a deplorable if, in view of the Münster terror, an explicable aberration from the golden declaration of an earlier time, that faith and thought are free, and that heresy cannot and ought not to be suppressed by the sword.

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[37] "Werke," l. 6 f.; Enders, x. 346. To his credit the Landgrave distinguished himself by his mild treatment of the Anabaptists. On his striving to win them over from their errors and the successful efforts of Bucer in this direction in 1538, see Lenz, "Briefwechsel Landgraf Phillips mit Bucer," i. 46 f., 317 f.

CHAPTER III

ECCLESIASTICAL AND EDUCATIONAL

I. Organisation and Discipline

As we have seen, Luther had recognised in the "Address to the Nobility" (1520) the Christian character of the civil power, and attributed to it the right and duty to take in hand the reformation which the Church itself was incapable of achieving. In the interval between the Diet of Worms and the Peasant Rising, he had modified his attitude as the result of the failure of the princes effectively to support the cause of reform at Worms, and had emphasised the distinction between the two spheres, spiritual and temporal, whilst still prepared to accept in practice the co-operation of the civil power in the work of reform. Ultimately, in 1526, he was fain to return to the standpoint of 1520 and appeal to the Elector John to undertake the organisation of the Saxon Church and the reformation of the religious life on evangelical lines. At the same time, he sought to maintain the distinction between the temporal and the spiritual sphere, and disallowed the right of the secular power to jurisdiction in purely spiritual affairs. In theory, at least, the Church, as a spiritual body, is governed only by the Word of God, and whilst the prince, as the possessor of the supreme power in the State, is to use this power to organise the evangelical Church, he is not entitled to rule in purely spiritual matters. His function is confined to the maintenance of civil order, and to the regulation of matters ecclesiastical, only in so far as they have a bearing on the common interest. In Luther's eyes the co-operation of the civil power in the organisation of the Church was, moreover, but a temporary expedient, necessitated by the exigencies of the existing situation (*Notepiscopat*) and did not involve the subordination of the Church to the civil authority in the purely spiritual sphere. In reality, however, the Church Ordinance of 1528 did ultimately prove to be the first step towards this consummation, though Luther himself strove, on occasion, throughout the period 1529-46, in opposition to the electoral officials and to his colleagues, Melanchthon and Justus Jonas, to vindicate its autonomy in this sphere. The distinction between the two spheres, notwithstanding, the Elector John and his successor, John Frederick, as the possessors of the secular power, assume and exercise the government of the Church in co-operation with their councillors and the theologians. The distinction becomes virtually one without a difference.

During these years he is still recognised as the leader of the evangelical Church, not merely in Saxony, but in the Lutheran principalities and cities. Princes and municipalities seek his counsel and judgment in the task of consolidating the evangelical movement. He is literally besieged with requests to provide preachers for the ever-expanding movement, to draw up or revise the constitutions of the churches in town or territory,[1] to advise and guide the ministers in the adoption of new forms of worship. To the Romanists he appears as " the Antipope " of the new Church, which was taking the place of the old throughout a large part of Germany. The inauguration of the new ecclesiastical constitution in Saxony itself started a multitude of problems, which taxed his time and his attention. The experiment did not always work smoothly, and led at times to friction between the local pastors and the local authorities—in the case of Zwickau, for instance, that stormy petrel of the Reformation movement. The Zwickau Town Council dismissed Soranus, preacher in St Catherine's Church, from his post on the ground of the objections of his congregation to his person and preaching, and without consultation with the city pastor, Nic. Hausmann (February 1531). Soranus and Hausmann complained to Luther, who indited angry letters to the Council and its secretary, his old friend, Stephan Roth. In the epistle to Roth he charged the

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[1] See, for instance, the constitution for Göttingen. Enders, viii. 365 f.

Council with illegal procedure in dismissing Soranus without a regular trial, and denounced its action as arbitrary and tyrannical. "Do you think, you petty squires, that you shall be allowed thus to domineer over the Church and lay hands on the ecclesiastical revenues, which you have not founded and do not belong to you, and give them to whomsoever you please, as if you were the lords of the Church?"[2] To the Council itself he denied, in equally angry tone, the right to treat the preachers as their menials and dispose of ecclesiastical offices and revenue without the knowledge and consent of the city pastor and the permission of the Elector, and renounced communion with them.[3] In another epistle he appealed to the Elector himself, on their behalf, and demanded his intervention against such local tyrants of the Church.[4]

In reply, Roth rebutted the charge that the Council had acted without due inquiry or substantial reason, accused Luther in turn of impulsively condemning them without hearing their version of the facts, denied the accusation of appropriating the Church revenues, and denounced the vituperative preaching of Soranus and other Lutheran preachers, who only alienate their hearers by their abusive tirades, instead of edifying them in the Gospel.[5] Luther was too incensed to give himself the benefit of even perusing this spirited defence, and sent back the letter unopened.[6] He persisted in his *ex parte* attitude and exhorted Hausmann to refuse to recognise Cordatus, whom the Council had installed as the successor of the ejected preacher, and publicly to protest against his admission without his co-operation and consent.[7] His rather unreasonable attitude in refusing to listen to the other side was evidently due to his conviction that the Council, in ejecting Soranus and appointing Cordatus in his place, without consulting his ecclesiastical superior, Hausmann, was unwarrantably intruding into the spiritual sphere. " These villains shall not thus trample underfoot the ministry of the Word, as they purpose to do, or they shall merit a still worse epithet." [8] At his invitation, Hausmann and Cordatus retired to Wittenberg,[9] pending the submission of the case to the Elector's judgment. Meanwhile he penned an epistle to the people of Zwickau, exhorting them to bear with patience the ungodly régime of the authorities, whilst not expressing their approval of it, refrain from contention and violence, and attend service and sacrament until the prince had given judgment.[10]

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[2] Enders, viii. 368-369, 4th March 1531.

[3] *Ibid.*, viii. 370-371.

[4] *Ibid.*, viii. 372.

[5] *Ibid.*, viii. 384 f., 3rd April 1531. See also the letter of the two Burgomasters, Bärensprung and Mühlpfort, *ibid.*, viii. 374-375, from Torgau, 8th March 1531.

[6] *Ibid.*, viii. 397.

[7] *Ibid.*, viii. 392 f., 17th April 1531.

In response to his appeal the Elector summoned both parties to appear at Torgau and submit the case for judgment to his commissioners. Accordingly, on the 3rd August, Luther, Melanchthon, and Jonas appeared on behalf of the aggrieved preachers, whilst the Burgomaster Bärensprung justified the action of the Zwickau Council. Both sides indulged in heated altercation, and in the face of this mutual recrimination, the commissioners were fain to recommend to the Elector a compromise, which sought to take account of the contentions of both. Henceforth, as Luther had demanded, no preacher should be appointed or displaced by the local authority without the express sanction of the Elector. On the other hand, the Elector gave his approval to the Council's request for the demission of Hausmann and Cordatus, whom they ultimately compensated by a money present.[11] A reconciliation later took place between Luther and the Council through the good offices of his old friend and pupil, Leonhard Beier, Hausmann's successor. But it was only with great effort that he could bring himself to take back into his fellowship the outspoken secretary. To his opponents, Luther's passionate insistence on the rights of the clergy seemed a new form of popery. " Doctor," said Mühlpfort, at a later rencontre at

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[8] Enders, viii. 398.

[9] *Ibid.*, ix. 15, 17th May 1531.

[10] " Werke," 54, 234-237 (Erlangen ed.), 21st June 1531. Letter in similar terms to the other preachers at Zwickau. Enders, ix. 30.

[11] Enders, ix. 58-59; " Corp. Ref.," ii. 590.

Torgau (February 1532), "You will never bring us under the Pope. We have become much too knowing for that." "Is it not a nuisance," replied Luther, "that I have made other people so learned, and yet myself know nothing."[12]

The "Instruction" and the "Church Ordinance" of 1527-28 were only a tentative effort to organise the evangelical Church and reform the religious life of Saxony. The practical results had been far from satisfactory, and in June 1531 the Elector John, in response to the representation made by the provincial Estates at Zwickau, issued an edict on the amendment of the prevailing declension of the religious and social life.[13] In the following year he was compelled by the existing disorder to initiate a new visitation of his territories. In a missive to Luther, Melanchthon, and Jonas, a few days before his death in August 1532, he confessed that his efforts to cope with the prevailing evils had not been generally effective. Numerous complaints have reached him from the evangelical pastors of their maltreatment by the local authorities and others, and their lack of sufficient maintenance owing to the misappropriation of the ecclesiastical revenues. On the other hand, there were many counter-complaints on the score of the teaching and personal conduct of some of the pastors. He, therefore, requested the theologians to revise the "Instruction" of 1527, for the guidance of a new visiting commission for the whole of his territories.[14] His successor, John Frederick, took up the project and sought the advice of Luther on the question of the disposal of the old ecclesiastical revenues ("Sequestration," as it was technically termed). In his reply (October 1532), Luther advised that these revenues should primarily be applied to the maintenance of the ministry, the schools, hospitals, and the poor. In the disposal of the remainder he would not limit himself by the prescriptions of the Canon Law, or purely juristic considerations, but consider the public utility in a broad sense. Even under the papal régime popes, bishops, and clergy had been ready enough to apply these revenues to purposes not strictly ecclesiastical. He would, therefore, assign to the Elector himself a share of the remainder by way of indemnity for his manifold contributions in support of the Gospel. The rest he would use to subsidise the poorer nobility and in the construction of public works, such as roads, bridges, fortifications, etc.[15]

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[12] "Tischreden," ii. 491.

[13] Sehling, "Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16ten Jahrhunderts," i. 178 f.

[14] Enders, ix. 214-215, beginning of Aug. 1532.

The maintenance of the ministry, as well as an adequate supervision of teaching and morals, was also emphasised by the provincial Estates at their meeting at Weimar. These representations were accordingly embodied in the revised "Instruction,"[16] which was issued on the 19th December 1532, for the visitations, not only of the electorate proper, but for all the territories subject to the Elector in Meissen and Voigtland, Thuringia, and Franconia.[17]

One of the fruits of the visitation was the revision of the ecclesiastical constitution of Wittenberg itself. This Ordinance consigns the ministerial charge of the city and the adjoining villages to the city minister and four assistants (caplans, or deacons), in addition to the two preachers whom the Elector maintained in the Castle Church. It recognises the city as the ecclesiastical metropolis of electoral Saxony, and confers on its minister, along with Provost of Kemberg, the supervision of the clergy of the whole electorate, with the title of superintendents, and the charge of the respective regions east and west of the River Elbe. It entrusts the election of the city minister to a stated number of representatives of the University and the Town Council, and that of the assistants to the minister in consultation with the three burgomasters. It prescribes in detail the daily and Sunday services, and the form of worship, communion, and baptism, after the model of Luther's German Mass of 1526 and the Church Ordinance of 1528. In addition to the preaching of the Word at all these services, it emphasises the importance of instructing the people and the children in Luther's Catechism at the early Sunday morning service in city and village, and on certain other occasions. It authorises the observance of the principal Christian feast days, with appropriate services, and the practice of confession to the ministers in church, and grants the benefit of confession and sacrament to the sick in their homes. It also contains regulations bearing on the education of children of both sexes and on the care of the sick and the poor.[18]

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[15] "Werke," 54, 334-336; 65, 54-56 (Erlangen ed.).

[16] It is given by Sehling, i. 183 f.

[17] For the documents relative to these regions, see Sehling, i. 187 f.

In these Ordinances nothing is said about the excommunication of unworthy members, which that of 1528 had recognised and commended. Whilst they emphasise the necessity of a more effective discipline, they leave to the civil power the supervision and vindication of Christian morality, and empower the local authorities to punish delinquencies of an ecclesiastical nature. They simply follow the mediæval method of punishing not only offences against social order—drunkenness, adultery, fornication—but those of a more purely ecclesiastical character, of which the episcopal courts formerly took cognisance, such as frequenting taverns, or loitering and walking in the churchyards and the streets during the hours of public worship. The civil authority is thus to take upon itself the function of ecclesiastical policeman, and the ministers shall confine themselves to denouncing in their sermons the sins specified in the Ordinances, and hearing confessions, whilst refraining from personal vituperation, and showing an example of good Christian living.

The problem of initiating a system of discipline in the evangelical churches was one that urgently called for solution, in the face of the prevailing demoralisation inherited from the misgovernment and moral atrophy of the Roman Church.[19] The demoralisation had been aggravated by the catastrophe of the Peasant Rising and its brutal suppression, and by the tendency of the feudal social order to repress the sense of individual responsibility among the serfish masses and hamper their moral elevation. Moreover, the emphasis on justification by faith, apart from works, was liable to be abused and made a pretext for moral licence, in spite of Luther's insistence on the moral implications of this doctrine. Hence the urgency of the problem of coping with the prevailing evils and taking steps to foster and maintain a higher standard of Christian life by the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. Hence also the attempts at Wittenberg and elsewhere to render effective the practice of excommunication, as recommended by the Ordinance of 1528. Luther was, indeed, strongly opposed to the practice as developed in the mediæval Church. He regarded the greater excommunication, which involved civil pains and disabilities, as a mere device of the hierarchy to enslave and exploit the faithful, and denounced it as an unwarrantable encroachment on the civil power and a tyrannical oppression of the liberty and conscience of the individual.[20] At the same time, he was in favour of retaining, in an evangelical form, the lesser excommunication, which involved only exclusion from the sacrament and the fellowship of the faithful, in accordance with the teaching of Christ (Matt. xviii. 15 f.) and the institution of the apostolic Church.[21] As we learn from his correspondence, the practice in vogue at Wittenberg was to warn delinquents and allow them an interval for repentance and amendment. If they remained obdurate, the admonition was repeated by the minister in the presence of two witnesses, and in case they continued obdurate, they were publicly excluded, in the presence of the congregation, from communion and fellowship.[22] He advised its adoption, where possible, elsewhere in letters to his ministerial correspondents, who sought his advice on the subject.

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[18] Sehling, i. 700 f.

[19] On the general moral declension see, for instance, Luther's striking deliverance in the Preface to the Schmalkald Articles, "Werke," l. 195-196.

It proved, however, by no means easy or even feasible to introduce it throughout the evangelical churches, and the attempts to do so aroused the opposition of aggrieved persons, who complained of the arbitrary and tyrannical action of some of the preachers in denying them the right of communion. At Magdeburg, Lochau, Zwickau, Nürnberg, and elsewhere, there was friction over the question, and even at Wittenberg it does not seem to have been possible systematically to enforce the practice. He was afraid of exciting disturbance by precipitate action, and advised patience in dealing with recalcitrant individuals and reliance on the preaching of the Word.[23] Whilst commending the zeal of the Hessian ministers on behalf of a Christian discipline, he doubts the expediency of such "a sudden innovation." The people are not yet fitted for drastic measures of this kind. "We must, for a time, leave the peasants," he tells them, "to riot themselves out. A drunk man should get out of the way of a cartload of hay. Things will by and by right themselves. We may not drive them by way of law." [24]

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[20] See, for instance, his tract, Von den Schlüsseln, "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 435 (1530).

[21] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. II., 462; *cf.* 501.

[22] Enders, vii. 213. Letter to Stiefel, pastor at Lochau, 2nd Jan. 1530; *ibid.*, ix. 365, letter to Beier at Zwickau, 1533. In this letter, however, the preliminary warning includes a threat to hand them over to the civil authority for punishment.

He was fain to adopt the same hesitating attitude in the case of Nürnberg, where the question had excited a violent controversy between the hot-headed and uncompromising Osiander and his colleague, Link. Osiander insisted on individual confession to the minister before admission to the communion, as the only effective method of maintaining discipline, whereas Link and the other preachers, with the support of the Town Council and the people, were content with a general confession by the congregation before communion. In this emergency the Town Council sought the advice of Luther and Melanchthon[25] in April 1533. Both gave their opinion that the general confession and absolution before communion should remain in force, whilst approving of allowing private confession when desired.[26] This compromise in deference to the will of the majority failed to assuage the bitter contention and, in response to a second appeal of the Town Council,[27] they repeated their judgment, with more detailed reasons.[28] Whilst private confession and absolution are serviceable as a means of comfort to the individual conscience, the Gospel promises forgiveness to all who in faith receive this promise. Forgiveness is thus not necessarily conditioned by the formal absolution of the individual by the minister, though it may be salutary in certain cases. Let the disputants, therefore, agree, for the sake of peace and unity, to recognise the validity of both practices, and accord liberty to observe either. Luther strove by personal letters to Osiander and Link to persuade them to let the contention slumber meanwhile, and leave the solution to time. He emphasised the inexpediency of this dogmatic contentiousness, which only made sport for the Romanist, Sacramentarian, and Anabaptist enemy, and reminded them with moving eloquence of the principle that "love goes above and before right."[29] These letters do him great credit in his capacity of peacemaker, and show the incarnate fighter and dogmatist in the rare rôle of the bearer of the olive branch in the theological arena.

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[23] See, for instance, letter to Amsdorf at Magdeburg, Enders, ix. 211, July 1532.

[24] Enders, ix. 317, June 1533.

[25] *Ibid.*, ix. 288-289.

[26] "Corp. Ref.," ii. 645-650.

[27] Enders, ix. 337-340, Sept. 1533.

[28] "Corp. Ref.," ii. 670 f., 8th Oct. 1533.

At the same time, in his treatment of this harassing problem of a practical reformation, he shows a lack of the organising initiative, which Calvin, who was faced with the same problem on a smaller scale at Geneva, was to handle in a much more effective manner. In devising a disciplinary system adequate to the situation, Calvin made use of the principle of the co-operation of pastor and people. To this end he had recourse to the institution of the eldership on the model of the primitive Church. Only by means of corporate action was it feasible to supervise and vitalise the moral life of the community in the special conditions of the time, and whatever the defects of this corporate method from the point of view of personal liberty, it undoubtedly proved an effective method of grappling with the problem of moral degeneration with which the reformers were faced. Attempts to apply this method had been made in Germany, in 1526, by Brenz at Schwäbisch-Hall, and by Francis Lambert for the Church of Hesse. Both went back to the model of the early Church in proposing to ensure an effective discipline by the revival of the eldership in a modern form.[30]

[29] Enders, ix. 322 (20th July 1533), 343 f. (8th Oct.).

[30] See the Kirchenordnung for Schwäbisch-Hall in Richter, "Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen," i. 45 f., and for Hesse, i. 61 f.

Unfortunately, these attempts proved abortive, and for the failure of that of Lambert, Luther's opposition to this more democratic and practical organisation was, as we have noted,[31] responsible. The man who could shake the world and initiate a religious revolution by the force of his adamant will and creative mind, was apt to prove rather helpless and take refuge in mere expediency when faced with the practical problem of applying his religious principles in a given situation. The situation was, indeed, extraordinarily difficult in view of the prevailing moral degeneration. But it is just the extraordinarily difficult situations that become the opportunities of the born statesman. As Napoleon said, "Difficulties make great men," and Luther's genius was that of the religious thinker and the prophet, rather than the practical statesman. He had, moreover, what amounted to almost a morbid aversion to the juristic regulation of the religious life as embodied in the Canon Law, and under the influence of this aversion, he carried his reaction from the Romanist system of legalist interference with individual Christian liberty to an impractical length.

Hence his inability, at times, to grasp the necessities of the situation, which were urgent enough, and merely argue and protest, instead of acting a definite and adequate part—in the case, for instance, of the outcry which the report of his intention to introduce at Wittenberg more drastic and systematic disciplinary measures, in February 1539, aroused. In a sermon on the subject,[32] he defended the practice of public excommunication in the interest of Christian morality, and in accordance with the teaching of Christ and Paul. He would strive, by moral means, to vindicate and preserve the Christian standard of life within the community. No one should be admitted to the Lord's Supper who was guilty of gross sin, and after due admonition, remained unrepentant. Such obdurate sinners should be publicly cut off from fellowship, and pastor and people should co-operate in maintaining this salutary discipline, which has nothing to do with civil pains and penalties.[33] The repression of gross offences should be left to the civil power, whose business it is to maintain civil order. Excommunication is a purely spiritual expedient. That he was prepared to enforce it against sinners of high as well as low degree, his resolute attempt to debar the dissolute Wittenberg governor (*Landvogt*), Hans Metzsch, and a local nobleman, who was guilty of extortionate usury, from the Lord's Table, shows.[34] He was, too, now in favour of the revival of the eldership in the churches, as a means of rendering discipline more effective,[35] and cordially welcomed the provision to this effect made under the guidance of Bucer in the new Hessian Church Ordinance of 1539. In this Ordinance, elders were to be elected by representatives of the local authority and the congregation to assist the ministers in the supervision of its members.[36] "The Hessian model of discipline pleases me," he wrote to Lauterbach in April 1543. "If you shall be able to establish it, you will have achieved a good work. But the centaurs and harpies of the court will take it ill. May the Lord be with us! Everywhere the licence and petulance of the people increase. The fault lies with the magistracy, which does nothing but exact tribute. The

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[31] "Luther and the Reformation," iii. 289. Hausrath excuses Luther's lack of initiative in these practical matters by saying that he knew his German folk better than the French Lambert, and that such an organisation would have broken down in the face of the German "phlegm" and lack of "community sense." A man of Luther's powers of intellect and will should, however, have known how to overcome such obstacles.

[32] "Werke," xlvii. 669-671.

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[33] See on this distinction the Schmalkald Articles, "Werke," l. 247.

[34] On his resolute attitude towards Metzsch, see his spirited letter to the Elector John, June 1531, Enders, ix. 27-29. Darauf ich ihm abgesagt für meine Person alle gemeinschaft und das Sacrament heimlich verboten. On the episode see Köstlin-Kawerau, "Luther," ii. 438-439.

[35] See the communication to Osiander, Link, and the other ministers at Nürnberg in reference to the "Bedenken" submitted to the meeting of the Schmalkald League in Jan. 1540, "Corp. Ref.," iii. 965; Enders, xii. 392. Restituatur et excommunicatio, non ut ante in litibus rerum prophanarum, sed de flagitiis manifestis, *adhibitis in hoc judicium senioribus in qualibet Ecclesia*; *cf.* "Corp. Ref.," iii. 941, for the "Bedenken" itself. Diehl, "Bucer's Bedeutung für das kirchliche Leben in Hessen," 546 (1904).

[36] Richter, "Kirchenordnungen," i. 290-291.

Governments have become mere institutions for the ingathering of treasures and taxes. Therefore the Lord will destroy us in His anger. Would that the day of our redemption would quickly come!"[37] Rather a hopeless mood; and in this mood Luther remained to the end. The reform of the social and religious life accordingly appears little more than a pious aspiration as far as he was concerned.

The problem of the maintenance of ecclesiastical discipline led at length in 1539 to the plan of establishing courts for the administration of ecclesiastical affairs. So far, little had been done to substitute some form of juridical authority for the consistorial courts of the old episcopal régime. These courts had dealt, *inter alia*, with matrimonial causes, and one compelling reason for renewing them in an evangelical form was the difficulty and trouble of settling suits of this kind. In the Church Ordinances the superintendents, in co-operation with the local authorities, were empowered to deal with these suits.[38] But this method had not proved efficacious, and Luther, as well as the local pastors, had been continually called on to advise and arbitrate in such cases. As the result of this inchoate system, he had repeatedly expressed his desire to be rid of this harassing business. He held, in fact, that it was the duty of the civil authority, not of the Church, to judge in such causes, and that the bishops had usurped a function which did not belong to them. "I am constantly plagued with matrimonial matters. I protest and cry aloud: Leave such things to the civil powers; and, as Christ says, Let the dead bury their dead. We should be the servants of Christ, that is, occupy ourselves with the Gospel and the conscience. With this we have more than enough to do in the struggle against the devil, the world, and the flesh."[39] He was, therefore, cordially in favour of the proposal to transfer the episcopal jurisdiction in these causes to the civil authority and establish courts or consistories for this purpose, which Melanchthon, Justus Jonas, and the jurist Schurf embodied in an Opinion (Bedenken) submitted to the Elector in 1538.[40]

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[37] Enders, xv. 131; *cf.* xiv. 119, Nov. 1541.

[38] See, for instance, Sehling, i. 176, 186, 196, 198.

[39] Von Ekesachen, "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 207 f. (1530); *cf.* Melanchthon's judgment submitted to the Schmalkald League, 1537, "Corp. Ref.," iii. 285. Illud satis est recitasse, he concludes a review of the unjust law and practice previously in vogue in such causes, quod multæ sunt injustæ leges Papæ de negotiis matrimonialibus, propter quas Magistratus debent alia judicia constituere.

The scheme worked out in this document was, however, not confined to these suits, but dealt with the whole question of ecclesiastical discipline. Its authors saw in the establishment of secular courts—invested by the head of the State with a wide jurisdiction in ecclesiastical affairs and acting as his organ—the only means of coping with the rampant demoralisation. Melanchthon, indeed, would fain have retained for this purpose the old episcopal régime, if the bishops would have agreed to an evangelical reformation of doctrine and usage, and repeatedly suggested this solution of the problem. This suggestion, of which Luther had, on occasion, approved in virtue of expediency, proved impracticable owing to the refusal of the hierarchy to accept the proposed accommodation. The only alternative seemed, therefore, to lie in the direction of entrusting the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, previously exercised by the bishops through the episcopal Consistories, to civil courts acting under the authority of the Elector, and of according to their procedure and decisions legal validity and effect. The proposed consistorial jurisdiction was, in fact, the perpetuation of the episcopal Consistory in a secular form.[41] Instead of investing the maintenance of discipline within each church in the minister and elders chosen for this purpose, as in the Hessian Ordinance of 1539, this function should be committed to a civil court, nominated by the Elector and empowered to enforce its decisions with civil pains and penalties. This was really a reversion to the old practice of the greater excommunication which Luther had strenuously denounced and opposed, but in which Melanchthon, Jonas, and the jurists saw the only remedy for the relaxed moral discipline of all classes, and especially the mass of the people. The " Bedenken " of 1538 accordingly proposed the erection of Consistories, with jurisdiction in ecclesiastical affairs and power to cite delinquents, judge and punish ecclesiastical offences, and enforce their sentences.[42]

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[40] The urgency of the problem of establishing a more effective method of dealing with such causes, etc., had been pressed upon the Elector John Frederick by the Saxon provincial Estates at Torgau in May 1537. In response, the Elector requested the theologians and jurists to draw up an Opinion on the subject. Hence the " Bedenken " of 1538. See the preamble to the constitution of the Wittenberg Consistory, Sehling, i. 200. Its actual author seems to have been Jonas, in consultation with Melanchthon, Schurf, and others.

[41] Sohm, " Kirchenrecht," 609 f.

On the lines of this document the Elector proceeded in tentative fashion, in February 1539, to institute at Wittenberg a Consistory for electoral Saxony, without meanwhile extending the system to the other regions subject to his jurisdiction, as it proposed. Three years later its jurisdiction was farther defined and fixed in " the Constitution," which, though not formally promulgated, reflects in general the characteristic features of the consistorial form of government in Saxony, and, largely, elsewhere.[43] The " Constitution " adduces the urgency of ordering the ecclesiastical government in the interest of religion, morality, and social order, and directs the institution of two other consistories at Zeitz and Zwickau in addition to that of Wittenberg. The Wittenberg Consistory is to consist of four commissioners—two theologians and two jurists—with certain subordinate officials. Their function is to exercise jurisdiction, along with the superintendents, over the life and teaching of the ministers, and to ensure uniformity of worship, ecclesiastical usage, including confession before communion, the due administration of the sacraments, the observance of feast days, the regular attendance and befitting behaviour of the people in church, the repression and punishment of gross sins, the adequate maintenance of the ministry and the church fabrics. The members shall make an annual visitation of the electorate, hold themselves, or, in certain cases, through the superintendents, an inquisition into the conduct of pastors and people, and proceed against delinquents who, in case of obduracy, are to be excommunicated and punished with various penalties. Secret betrothals without the consent of parents are declared invalid, though the parents are required to show reasonable cause for their objections to the union of the parties.

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[42] The " Bedenken " is given by Richter, " Zeitschrift für Deutsches Recht," iv. 62 f. (1840), and in his " Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirchenverfassung," 82 f. (1851).

[43] Sehling, i. 57; Mejer, " Lehrbuch des Deutschen Kirchenrechts," 171 (1869), and " Zum Kirchenrecht des Reformationsjahrhunderts "; Sehling-Mejer, " Real-Encyclopädie," x. 752 f. (1901).

The infliction of civil penalties and disabilities as the result of excommunication did not, however, commend itself to the Elector, who inserted a note to the effect that the punishment of gross offences against morality shall be left to the ordinary civil courts, which shall accordingly be notified by the Consistory. His refusal to sanction this part of the "Constitution" was probably due, as Sohm asserts,[44] to the influence of Luther, who, though he had so far approved of the establishment of these courts,[45] was decidedly opposed to the introduction of what was practically the great excommunication of the old episcopal régime. He was still, as his "Table Talk" shows, strongly averse to the legal regulation of the religious life, even in the interest of morality, and one shares his objection to the infliction of civil penalties for purely ecclesiastical offences, and sympathises with his contention that the penalising of offences of a criminal nature belongs to the secular power. "I allow the jurists to have their place in the temporal government. But when they presume to take upon themselves the government of the Church, they are no longer jurists, but canonists and asseheads."[46] "We must break up the consistory. We will simply not have the jurists and the Pope within it. The jurists, with their processes, have no right at all to be in the Church. Otherwise they will bring the Pope in again."[47] "The pious Elector will not suffer it that the Bishop of Maintz shall here in Wittenberg have his jurists and rule our consistory." [48] "We know, thank God, as St Paul says, that the law is good, holy, and just when we make a right use of it. But we will not and cannot suffer the villainy and arbitrariness of the jurists and their malpractice and misuse of it, but utterly reject it. And since they persist in this kind of thing, we will throw them out of the Church to the devil, and they shall know that the consistory shall not stand under the law, but under the pastors." [49] He was, in fact, decidedly hostile to the legal regulation of worship and usage in the interest of a merely external uniformity. "Ceremonies," we read in the Wittenberg Church Ordinance of 1533, "are not obligatory laws. It is left to the discretion of the pastor to act in this matter as seems most serviceable." [50] "I am, I confess," he wrote to Prince George of Anhalt, whom he ordained evangelical Bishop of Merseburg in 1545, "disinclined to all ceremonies, even the necessary ones, and I am the enemy of those which are not necessary. For not only my experience of the papal Church, but the example of the ancient Church, has inflamed me against them. Ceremonies so easily grow into laws, and laws, once established, speedily become snares of the conscience. Ultimately pure doctrine is obscured and overthrown, and people strive more for ceremonies than for the mortification of the flesh. The result is division and discord, as we see in the sects to-day, where every one follows only his own idea." [51]

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[44] "Kirchenrecht," i. 626.

[45] Enders, xiii. 246. Letter to Spalatin, Jan. 1541. Nam etsi hic Wittenberge Consistorium ceperit constitui, tamen ubi absolutum fuerit, nihil ad Visitatores pertinebit. Sed ad causas matrimoniales (quas hic ferre amplius nec possumus nec volumus) et ad rusticos cogendos in ordinem aliquem disciplinæ et ad persolvendos reditus pastoribus, quod forte et nobilitatem et Magistratus passim necessario attinget.

[46] "Werke," 62, 238-239 (Erlangen ed.).

[47] *Ibid.*, 62, 266.

The "Constitution" has a section on the investiture of the minister by the superintendent. The ceremony is to take place in the presence of the congregation with the reading of relative passages from 1 Tim., the commendation of the pastor to the people, and the laying on of hands. In the matter of ordination, Luther reacted strongly from the traditional priestly conception. Against the Roman sacrament of orders, he emphasised that of baptism, by which all Christians are made priests. In the conferring of ecclesiastical office, all that is necessary, in addition to prayer and the testing of the worthiness of the candidate, is the "vocation" or calling on the part of the members of the Christian community. "To ordain," he says sententiously, "means simply to call and entrust the pastoral office."[52] Though, besides this vocation, a formal religious ceremony is not essential to the exercise of the ministerial function, he was not averse to its adoption, as his communication to the Bohemian Brethren in 1523 shows.[53] He himself, in May 1525, set apart George Rörer, who had not received priestly consecration, to the office of deacon in the Wittenberg parish church with prayer and the laying on of hands—the first known instance of an ordination in the evangelical form. In 1531 in the case of Sutel, who, though not in priestly orders, had been called to undertake the ministerial function at Göttingen, and had scruples about dispensing the Lord's Supper, he was of opinion that, if the members deemed it important, he should publicly, in church, receive from the other ministers, with prayer and the laying on of hands, authority to celebrate the rite. Otherwise he should continue to exercise his ministry in virtue merely of his vocation.[54]

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[48] Werke, 62, 235.

[49] *Ibid.*, 62, 235.

[50] Sehling, i. 705.

[51] Enders-Kawerau, xv. 259.

In view of such incidents, the problem of regulating the assumption of the ministerial office erelong became, as in the case of that of discipline, an urgent one. Too many unworthy preachers were being called by patrons or congregations to this office, without due investigation of character and ability. Moreover, it was inevitable that the civil power, in which the supreme direction of ecclesiastical affairs had been invested, should seek to regulate the admission of ministers to the pastoral charge. This the Elector had already attempted to do through the visitors and superintendents,[55] without prescribing the method of their admission. Hence the decree of May 1535, directing that all aspirants for ministerial office within the electorate, who had not received episcopal ordination, should, after trial by the local superintendent, be ordained by the Theological Faculty at Wittenberg, which had been empowered to confer the ministerial function.[56] Only thereafter should they receive the confirmation of the Elector to their office.

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[52] "Werke," xxxviii. 238 (1533): *cf.* xv. 720-721, Predigten des Jahres 1524.

[53] De Instituendis Ministris Ecclesiæ, "Werke," xii. 193-194.

[54] Enders, viii. 367. Nam si nihil serium ibi fuerit, vellem te, ut hactenus, abstineres; si vero serium fuerit, tum publice coram altari a reliquis ministris cum oratione et impositione manuum testimonium accipies et auctoritatem cœnæ tractandæ.

[55] Sehling, i. 171, 184, 197. For instance, in the Ordinance of 1533 for Saxon Franconia in reference to the presentation by patrons to

For this ceremony, which took place as part of the ordinary service in the parish church, Luther drew up a Formulary in German.[57] It began with the singing of the "Veni Sancte Spiritus," the ordinand or ordinands, and the ministers kneeling before the altar. Thereafter the ordaining minister read a portion of 1. Tim. iii., and Paul's address to the elders at Ephesus (Acts xx.), and addressed the ordinand on the pastoral office. The ordinand was then asked whether he was prepared to take upon himself this office and live in accordance with the scriptural character of a bishop. On answering in the affirmative, the ordaining minister, along with the other ministers present, laid hands on his head and commended him in prayer for the work of the ministry. Thereafter he repeated the passage from 1 Peter v. 2-4, and pronounced a blessing on him with the sign of the Cross. There followed the singing of the hymn "Nun bitten wir den Heiligen Geist" (Now we beseech the Holy Ghost). The rite closed with the celebration of the communion.[58]

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ministerial charges. Sollen die vom adel keinen pfarrer oder prediger aufnehmen er sei . . . erstlich durch die superattendenten examinirt ob er tuchtig und geschickt sei, *ibid.*, i. 197.

[56] The decree is given in "Zeitschrift für Kirchenrecht," 1905, 288 f.

[57] There was also a Latin version which was used in the case of ordinands who were not familiar with German. Foreigners were often ordained at Wittenberg for work in foreign lands. This version, which is essentially a reproduction of the German form, was probably made by Bugenhagen. Drews, "Introduction to the Ordinationsformular," "Werke," l. 421.

[58] The Formulary is given in its various early versions in "Werke," l. 423 f., with a valuable introduction by Drews. See also Rietschel, "Luther und die Ordination," 2nd ed., 1889, and "Lehrbuch der Liturgik," ii. 405 f. (1909). Drews, "Zeitschrift für Kirchenrecht" (1905). Luther seems to have made use of the Formulary in ordaining Amsdorf as Bishop of Naumburg in Jan. 1542. It was in reference to

II. EDUCATION AND CULTURE

The Church Ordinances are a striking testimony to the interest in education and the sense of its importance on the part of Luther and his fellow-reformers. They contain regulations relative to the instruction of children of both sexes. In his Address to the German Municipalities, Luther had, as we have seen, emphasised the value of a thorough Christian education for both Church and State, and the effect of this resounding appeal is perceptible in the stress laid in those documents on an adequate educational system. In spite of his frequent rather disparaging references to the masses, he continued to keep in the foreground the cardinal obligation of both rulers and parents to rear, by this education—higher as well as elementary—of the rising generation, an intelligent and enlightened people. In contrast to his shortsighted and reactionary attitude towards the co-operation of the masses for a far-reaching reform of the feudal social system, he was heart and soul, on religious and practical grounds, in favour of compulsory primary education for all children, and higher education for those who are fitted to profit by it. In the preface to the "Christian Economy" of Justus Menius, formerly pastor at Erfurt and later at Eisenach, he gives vent in his most characteristic style to his indignation at the materialist spirit of parents in the upbringing of their children. Such mercenary and negligent parents the Government ought to punish in body and goods. They do more harm to the commonweal than Turks or Tartars.[1] "The reason is that as much as in them lies they do nothing else than ruin both the spiritual and the temporal estate, and destroy

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the Elector's action in getting Amsdorf elected by the provincial Estates and the people of the diocese, in opposition to the bishop elected by the cathedral chapter, that he wrote his apology for the Elector's policy entitled "Exempel einen rechten Christlichen Bischof zu Weihen," "Werke," l. iii. 231 f. He seems also to have observed this order in ordaining Prince George of Anhalt to the evangelical bishopric of Merseburg in 1545.

[1] "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 61 (1529).

domestic life and the training of the young, who grow up sheer wild beasts and sows, and are of no use except for gorging and carousing. If we neglect the education of the young, where shall we get ministers and preachers apt to teach the Word of God, and undertake the pastoral charge and the public service of God? Where shall kings, princes and lords, cities and rural districts find chancellors, councillors, clerks, and officials? . . . What kind of a dissolute, wretched world shall be the result! Of necessity the spiritual and temporal estates, married and domestic life, must go to ruin, and the world become a real pigsty. . . . Such low-minded, careless parents and married couples should remember what God has commanded them, and what they owe to Him in the upbringing of their children. No, my dear fellow, if you have a child fitted for learning, you are not free to bring him up according to your pleasure. It does not lie in your arbitrary will to do with him what you please. You are in duty bound, you owe it to God, to further the interest of the commonweal and serve Him herein. God needs ministers, preachers, schoolmasters in His spiritual realm, and you can supply Him with these. Nevertheless you do not."[2] He announces, in conclusion, his intention to treat farther of this supremely important subject, and this intention he carried out in "A Sermon on the Duty of Keeping Children at School"[3] (August 1530).

In the dedication to his old friend, Lazarus Spengler, Syndic of Nürnberg, which had recently founded an additional high school, he praises the city for its educational zeal, and holds it up as an example of wise administration to the other German towns.[4] It is a rather diffuse disquisition on the text "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," and its "verbosity" plainly betrays its Lutheran origin, as he playfully confesses to Melanchthon.[5]

The devil is abroad in the land, spreading the notion that, now monkery and priestcraft are done away, learning

[2] "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 62.

[3] Eine Predigt dass man Kinder zur Schule halten solle, "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 517 f.

[4] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. II., 518.

[5] Enders, viii. 80, 204.

and study are superfluous, and the only object in life is to get a living and amass riches. At most it is enough to entrust the education of the child to an inferior class of pedagogue, gross asses and blockheads, who only teach their pupils to become sheer asses like themselves. Anything beyond this assinine pedagogy is useless lumber. Hence the obligation of the preachers to rouse their hearers out of this false notion, in order that the common man may not allow himself to be so lamentably deceived and seduced by the devil.

He first enlarges on the high worth and utility of the divinely instituted evangelical ministry, as compared with the traditional priesthood, whose chief office was to say Mass. These Mass priests were held in the highest honour, although they might not be able to preach and might be unlearned asses, as was mostly the case to this day. This only makes the duty of providing and maintaining an educated ministry all the more clamant. Judged by the value of his spiritual work in the saving of souls, "there is no more precious treasure than a true parson or preacher."[6] Apart from his spiritual function, his value to society, as the teacher of morality and order, is immeasurable. He is there to uphold the kingdom of God on earth against the devil, the world, the flesh. Could anyone make a better investment than in training a son for such an exalted work, which, in God's eyes, is higher than any kingdom or empire. "The sophists reproach us that we Lutherans do not teach good works. Are then the forementioned things not good works? What are all the works of religious foundations and monasteries compared with this glorious calling?"[7] He makes ample use of the threat of hell-fire in commending this investment. However much he has emancipated himself from the fear of hell, he always has this argument in reserve when the Gospel appeal fails. Considering the rude moral conditions of the time, and the current realistic belief in the devil, which his age shared with him, it was a very effective pulpit expedient. Justification by faith alone might be the only true doctrine, but all the same hell-fire with the devil was there for the justified sinner who failed to bring forth the fruits of faith, and Luther in his sermons has a potent ally even in the devil in the application of his text. "I had given thee children and goods thereto" (the farthering of the Gospel), he makes God address the mercenary minded sinner on his deathbed. "But thou hast wilfully left me and my kingdom to suffer need and pine away, and hast served the devil and his kingdom against me and my kingdom. Let the devil, then, be thy reward, and go thou down with him into the abyss of hell. My heavenly and earthly kingdom hast thou not helped to build up. The devil's home in hell hast thou rather helped to build and increase. Dwell, therefore, in the house thou hast helped to build."[8] He appeals to the lower, not the higher classes, to dedicate those of their sons, who have the required ability, to this highest of callings, and reminds the parents of such that there are funds enough for this purpose, and vacancies in plenty to ensure their future maintenance. He deplores the shrinkage of students at the universities, which makes the problem of the future supply of pastors a desperately urgent one.

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[6] "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 537.

[7] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. II., 541.

In the second place, the higher education is indispensable for the proper maintenance of civil government. Though the secular is not to be compared in importance with the spiritual realm, it is, nevertheless, a divine institution. Without it we should relapse into the state of savagery. It cannot be preserved by brute force, for where force alone rules men become brutalised. History amply shows what force, divorced from wisdom or reason, produces. As Solomon says, wisdom, not force, must rule. Law and order must be maintained, and, therefore, there must be those trained in the law and its administration in order to secure the benefits of security and orderly government. Those who enjoy these benefits are in duty bound to provide for the maintenance of them by promoting the higher education of the rising generation. To devote it only to the service of Mammon is a blind and wilful dereliction from the obligation of citizenship. A long digression is

[8] "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 543.

devoted to prove against the loud-voiced despisers of learning the worth of clerical work in the service of the State, which is also, in its way, the service of God. In the course of it he strikes a democratic note which reminds us of John Knox's retort to Queen Mary, that "Albeit I neither be earl, lord, nor baron, yet God has made me (how abject that ever I be in your eyes) a profitable member within this same Commonwealth."[9] Noblemen and knights have their place in the social order, and he will not depreciate any class. But it requires no great art on the part of these contemptuous carpers at learning and letters to bestride a horse and carry armour. They shall know that God is a wonderful handcraftsman, and it is His handiwork to make lords out of beggars, just as He made everything out of nothing. He challenges them with Psalm 113, "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high; who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth; who raiseth up the poor out of the dust that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people." "Look around on all the courts of kings and princes, on all towns and parishes, and see if this Psalm has not found many remarkable illustrations. There you will find jurists, doctors, councillors, clerks, preachers, who were usually poor scholars, but who through the pen have so bettered their condition as to become lords, as the Psalmist has it, and help the princes to rule land and people. God will not have it that born kings, princes, lords, and nobles shall alone rule and play the master. He will also have His beggars in the job. Otherwise these gentlemen would cherish the notion that noble birth alone makes lords and rulers, and not God only."[10] To enforce his conclusion he gives a significant personal reminiscence of his poverty as a boy who had sung in the streets of Eisenach for his bread, before his father was able, by the sweat of his brow and his industry, to send him to, and maintain him at, the University of Erfurt. "Nevertheless, I also have been a singing scholar (*parteken-hengst*), and in consonance with this Psalm, through my pen, have brought it so far that now I would not change places with the Sultan of Turkey, if I were to have all his riches at the price of lacking my learning. Nay, I would not exchange it for the whole world's goods, multiplied many times. Assuredly, I could not have got to my present position if I had not gone to school and taken up the trade of writing. Therefore, without misgiving, let your son study, and even if he must sometimes sing for his bread, you will give our Lord God a fine piece of wood, out of which He will carve a future lord. It will always remain so, that the children of the common people will have to rule the world in both the spiritual and the temporal spheres, as this Psalm shows. For the wealthy greedbugs cannot and will not do it. They are the monks of Mammon, who must day and night devote themselves to his service. The born princes and lords are incapable of doing it by themselves, and, in particular, they know nothing at all about the spiritual realm. Therefore the direction of both spheres on earth must remain in the hands of the middle class and common people and their children." [11] Is Luther after all the father of the modern Labour Government? Even commerce depends on the theologians and the jurists far more than the shortsighted merchant class divines. "Where the theologians disappear, there disappears God's Word, and there remain only sheer heathen—yea, sheer devils. Where the jurists are lacking, there right and security disappear, and there remain sheer robbery, murder, violence, and force—yea, sheer wild beasts. What the merchant will gain under such conditions, his account books will very soon teach him." [12]

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[9] "History of the Reformation," ii. 388.

[10] "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 575-576.

He concludes with a eulogy on the function of the schoolmaster and the physician: "We can never sufficiently reward or evaluate a zealous, pious schoolmaster who faithfully disciplines and trains our boys, as the heathen Aristotle says. But this work is among us shamefully despised as if it were of no value. And yet we profess to be Christians. For my part, if I could desist, or were compelled to desist from the preaching office and other duties, I would choose no other office so readily as that of schoolmaster. Next to the preaching office, it is the most useful, the greatest, and the best. I hardly know which of the two is the better, for it is difficult to master old dogs and make old rascals pious by preaching. But one can bend and train the young tree more easily, even if some are broken in the process." [13] He closes in his most pessimistic vein as he reflects on the general apathy of Germany towards the things of the Spirit, and its lack of active appreciation of the blessings which the Reformation has brought it. The situation reminds him of Lot and Sodom, and he hopes, if things do not take a turn for the better, to be taken away before the calamities which he foresees overwhelm the land.

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[11] "'Werke,'' xxx., Pt. II., 576-577.

[12] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. II., 578.

He had a profound sense of the educational value of historical instruction, and warmly commended it in a preface to Link's translation of Capella's "Historical Commentaries on the Recent History of Italy." [14] The advantage of the study of history lies in the fact that it instructs the mind by example, and its practical efficacy is incalculable from the moral point of view. History is nothing else than the reflection of God's government of the world, of the play of good and evil, and the effects of both on human destiny, as we may learn not only from Holy Scripture, but from the works of pagan writers. "Therefore the writers of history are the most serviceable and the best of teachers, whom one can never honour and praise enough." [15] It is the duty of emperors and kings and other great lords to encourage the writing of history, collect such works in libraries, and shun no expense in adequately training and maintaining those who are fitted for this work, as did the Jews and the kings of Persia. How deplorable is it that we Germans have no record of our forefathers of a thousand years ago, and know almost nothing of our origin except what we learn in the histories of foreign nations, who were perforce compelled to take notice of them. And yet every age has its memorable events, which are worthy of our attention. But history is of little use unless it is truthfully written, and for this task we need highly gifted men who will fearlessly write the truth. Most writers of history are lacking in this heroic fidelity, and hush up the vices of their patrons, and only give a partial account of their doings, or exaggerate their insignificant virtues. Many are only too prone to glorify the history of their own country at the expense of foreign nations. Thus history, as a rule, appears suspect, and is of little real value unless we learn to read the history books in a critical spirit.[16]

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[13] "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 579-580.

[14] Vorrede zu Historia Galeatii Capellæ, "Werke," l. 383 f. (1538). The Latin title of the work is "Galeatii Capellæ De Rebus nuper in Italia gestis" (1532).

[15] "Werke," l. 384.

As an educationist, Luther valued the Fables of Æsop very highly. In the Church Ordinance of 1528, the reading of the Fables is prescribed as part of the instruction of the middle class.[17] Their practical wisdom strongly appealed to him.[18] "There is assuredly in Æsop more instruction than in the whole of Jerome."[19] "It is by the providence of God that the writings of Cato and Æsop have remained in the schools. Next to the Bible, they are, in my judgment, the best; better than those of all the philosophers and jurists."[20] The edition in use in the schools was that published by Steinhöwel in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. It consisted of the Latin text and a German translation, and included a number of ribald stories culled from the "Facetiæ" of Poggio and Alfonsus. The inclusion of this rubbish in a book used in the instruction of the young roused his indignation, and during his stay at the castle of Coburg in 1530 he beguiled his leisure hours in revising Steinhöwel's collection and translation. "We shall build three tabernacles here," he wrote to Melanchthon in announcing to him his arrival at the end of April, "one to the Psalter, one to the Prophets, and one to Æsop."[21] He seems not to have made a new version from the Latin, but to have contented himself with revising the translation of Steinhöwel. Even so, it bears the stamp of his own linguistic aptitude, and still remains "a masterpiece of German prose."[22] In the preface he expresses his disbelief in the authorship or even the existence of Æsop, and regards these stories as the fruits of the practical wisdom of ancient sages, which some editor brought together under the name of this mythical author. For old as well as young, and not least for the princes and lords of this world, this collection is of the utmost value. Men hate nothing more than the truth, when it is directly brought home to them; yea, the truth is the most intolerable thing on earth. Hence the device of telling it in this veiled fashion, and teaching them, through the mouths of beasts, what they will not hear through the mouths of men. He has excised the shameful and depraving stories of a Poggio, which reek of the low tavern or bawdy-house, and hopes that all pious people will co-operate with him in substituting this expurgated and revised version for "the shameful German Æsop." Those who invent and read such stories "are pigs, and remain pigs, before which we should not cast pearls." Unfortunately, the translation was only a fragment. It contains only about a dozen of the Fables. Nor was it published till fully ten years after his death (1557).[23]

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[16] He drew up an historical table for reference in the course of his studies, under the title of "Supputatio Annorum Mundi." He begins with the creation and ends with 1541. This survey has been edited by Cohrs, "Werke," liii. 22 f. (1920). It shows the wide range of his historical knowledge, though, of course, it does not rest on original investigation. For post-Biblical times he makes large use of the "Chronica" of John Carion.

[17] Sehling, i. 172; "Werke," xxvi. 237.

[18] "T.R.," iv. 126 (Nov. 1538).

[19] *Ibid.*, i. 194 (1533).

[20] *Ibid.*, iii. 353 (1536).

Music was an integral part of the school and university curriculum, and its cultivation is emphasised in the Church Ordinances.[24] Luther, himself gifted with poetic sensibility, a rich and melodious voice, and no mean performer on the lute, was the enthusiastic patron of the divine art. It was his refuge in hours of depression and a mighty weapon wherewith to fight the devil. "The devil is a melancholy spirit and makes folk depressed. He cannot bear joy, and takes to flight as soon as one begins to sing."[25] "Music is the greatest—yea, the divine gift. It is the duty of kings and princes to encourage this divine art," and he praises the Elector Frederick, the Landgrave Philip, and even Duke George of Saxony and King Ferdinand, who maintain or encourage choirs and singing schools. One must at all hazards retain it in the schools. A schoolmaster who cannot sing is unworthy of his notice, and he would not ordain a young man who had not learned the art of song at school. It is a splendid discipline, since it tends to make people gentler, more virtuous, and rationally minded.[26] "Next to theology, I accord to music the chief place and the highest honour."[27] Such sayings might be multiplied from his "Table Talk" and their contents are amplified in the preface which he furnished for Rhau's "Symphoniæ Jucundæ" in 1538.[28] He himself not only regularly practised choral singing with his family and friends, but co-operated with the electoral singing masters, Rupff and Walther, in composing the music for his "German Mass" of 1526.[29] He reintroduced the singing of the Litany, which had fallen into disuse, in the service at Wittenberg in 1529, in connection with the menace of a Turkish invasion, and this part of the liturgy henceforth became a distinctive feature of evangelical worship.[30] In the Latin version he omitted the invocation of the Virgin and the saints and other passages incompatible with his evangelical teaching, introduced new supplications, and substituted for others more suitable ones. The Latin version he turned into German in an abbreviated and slightly modified form, and supplied the musical setting of both.[31]

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[21] Enders, vii. 303; *cf.* 332.

[22] Thiele and Brenner, "Introduction to the Fables," "Werke," l. 437.

[23] The preface is usually assigned to the year 1538. It was probably written in 1530.

[24] See, for instance, Sehling, i. 172-174, 194, 199.

The Church Ordinances further emphasise the value of a classical education, and that of 1528 prescribes a graduated course of reading in the Latin authors, including Terence, Plautus, Ovid, Virgil, and Cicero.[32] Luther shares with Melanchthon the merit of fostering a humanist education. He retained his love of the Latin poets to the end. He even learned in his later years to think better of "the blind heathen Aristotle," though he preferred Cicero as the model exponent of natural theology.[33] He occasionally dipped into the Latin verse of contemporary humanists, and wrote an enthusiastic eulogy of the Latin Psalter of his old humanist friend, Eobanus Hessus.[34] The fierce controversialist, who too often sinned against good taste in his duels with his theological opponents, could, when he pleased, excel in literary criticism, and instinctively responded to the fitting word, the delicate phrase. At table he often discoursed on the characteristics of the different languages, ancient and modern,[35] and interspersed his conversation with apt quotations from the classics—Horace, Ovid, Virgil.[36] Whilst he particularly valued the ancient languages as aids to the study of theology,[37] his critical dicta on the ancient writers show that a born professor of literature was lost in the theologian. He could, for instance, dilate on "the sententiousness" of Ovid, "the heroic seriousness" of Virgil.[38] It is significant that, as we have seen, he had carried his Plautus and Virgil into the Erfurt monastery.[39] He even defended the reading and acting of the comedies of Terence against the puritans, who feared their effects on youthful morals. To condemn and banish them on this account and ignore the other advantages of such reading would be to condemn and banish the Bible itself.[40] Essentially obscene literature, on the other hand, found in him a mordant and resolute antagonist. He appreciated, too, the value of art as the handmaid of religion, if not for its own sake, and cherished a warm admiration for the works of Cranach and Dürer, and the Italian and Flemish masters.

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[25] "T.R.," i. 86. [26] *Ibid.*, i. 490. [27] *Ibid.*, vi. 348.

[28] "Werke," l. 368 f. For further particulars see the later section on Luther's hymns.

[29] *Ibid.*, xix. 48 f. [30] See Sehling, i. 192.

[31] The Litany in Latin and German is given in "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 21 f., with valuable introduction by Drews, Sannemann, and Brenner. See also Drews, "Studien zur Geschichte des Gottesdienstes und des Gottesdienstlichen Lebens" (1910).

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[32] Sehling, i. 172-174.

[33] "T.R.," iii. 451; vi. 345.

[34] Enders, xi. 254.

[35] *Ibid.*, i. 524; ii. 639, 657; iii. 243; iv. 78; v. 61.

[36] *Ibid.*, iii. 498.

[37] *Ibid.*, ii. 639, etc.

[38] *Ibid.*, iii. 459, etc.

[39] *Ibid.*, i. 44.

[40] *Ibid.*, i. 430 f.

Unfortunately his humanist sympathies did not lead him to modify his irreconcilable attitude towards Erasmus, whom Melanchthon and the more moderate reformers continued to honour as the chief of the republic of letters. In 1533 Erasmus published an irenic missive on the desirability of the unity of the Church, in the hope of bringing Romanists and reformers together through a Council.[41] It was a characteristic and well-meant commendation of the policy of splitting the difference, but without adequate insight into the far-reaching divergence of principle between the two parties. The Hessian preacher, Corvinus, wrote a dialogue on the subject, and succeeded in persuading Luther to furnish a preface to it.[42] In this preface [43] he strives to bridle his pen, and recognises the good intentions of Erasmus and his followers in seeking to bring about an accommodation of theological convictions. But such an accommodation is incompatible with fidelity to conscience and truth.[44] There is a wide difference between harmony in matters of faith and the exercise of the spirit of charity which, he asserts somewhat hazardously, he has always been ready to observe towards his opponents. It is useless to speak of charity in the case of the papists, whose only method of dealing with their opponents who, in obedience to conscience, refuse to place tradition above God and His Word, is the method of blood and iron. He forgot that in their treatment of the Anabaptist sectaries the Lutherans were becoming only too prone to apply this execrable method. In the place of the Word the Romanists put the Church. They are always shouting, " Church, Church, Church," and Erasmus, in ignoring the inexorable obligation of the claims of the Word, is only confirming them in their impious infatuation and error. What they call the Church is merely the figment of their imagination—" the synagogue of Satan." He would, therefore, do better to leave theology alone and devote himself to his own proper sphere as a humanist scholar. What he thought of him he wrote much less reservedly to the narrow and obscurantist Amsdorf, who had questioned his general orthodoxy, and to whom Luther gave a far too ready credence.[45] His animosity towards him was accentuated by the attacks on the Reformation of the renegade Witzel, whom Amsdorf represented as merely the mouthpiece of Erasmus. In this lengthy epistle, which was intended for publication, he questions his sincerity and accuses him of heterodoxy on the doctrine of the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, the Resurrection, and other fundamentals of the Christian faith. Erasmus is "an epicurean and crafty derider of Christ."[46] He is the enemy in the parable, who overnight sowed tares among the wheat,[47] and he would fain see his works expelled from the schools.[48] To this misrepresentation Erasmus replied with a forcible refutation,[49] which Luther, to the relief of Melanchthon, who tried to keep it out of his way, ignored. He contented himself with venting his feelings in his "Table Talk," which contains many explosions of his contempt for the modern Epicurus and Lucian, the enemy of all religion, and the sworn antagonist of Christ.

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[41] De amabili Ecclesiæ Concordia.

[42] Enders, x. 84 f.

[43] " Werke," xxxviii. 276 f. (1534).

[44] Sed conscientia et veritas ipsa hanc concordiæ rationem tolerare non potest.

The religious and social turmoil of the decade 1521-31 had told adversely on the higher education at Wittenberg as well as the other German universities. The number of students had greatly diminished, though the diminution at Wittenberg was smaller than elsewhere. Luther had striven to remedy the evil by his appeals on behalf of higher education. He and his colleagues initiated a reform of the curriculum which the Elector John Frederick carried out in 1533 in the case of the Theological Faculty and of the whole university in 1536. One expedient was to enhance the prestige of academic degrees by the revival of the disputation, which had fallen into disuse in the Theological Faculty since 1525. The first of those presented for the degree of Doctor of Theology, under the revived practice, were Bugenhagen, Cruciger, and the Hamburg superintendent Aepin. Melanchthon drew up the theses for the disputation, which took place in June 1533, and over which Luther presided. The ceremony was graced by the presence of the Elector and a number of other magnates, and the Englishman Barnes, Henry VIII.'s envoy, and the future martyr of the English Reformation, and the Scottish refugee, Alexander Alesius (Allan), took part in it. It was concluded with a banquet, given by the Elector in the castle. Two years later (September 1535) followed the "promotion" of Luther's intimate friend, Jerome Weller, who became superintendent at Freiberg, and Nicolas Medler, superintendent at Naumburg. On this occasion Luther drew up the theses as well as presided over the disputation.[50] He provided, too, the doctoral feast, for which the Elector, at his request, sent a present of game, and which his goodwife, "Domina Kethe," served up to the complete satisfaction of her guests.[51]

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[45] Enders, x. 8 f., March 1534.

[46] *Ibid.*, x. 13. [47] *Ibid.*, x. 20. [48] *Ibid.*, x. 22.

[49] "Purgatio adversus epistolam non sobriam Mart. Lutheri" (1534).

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[50] These and other disputations are given in "Werke," xxxix., Pt. I., ed. by Hermelink (1926).

[51] Enders, x. 184, 206.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMPEROR AND THE REFORMATION (1539-46)

I. The Policy of Conciliation

Despite the refusal of the Protestants to take part in the General Council which Paul III. had proposed to convene at Mantua in 1537, Charles did not abandon the attempt to allure them, by negotiation, back to the old fold. His anxiety to cultivate their goodwill was quickened by the renewal in 1536 of the war with Francis I., who had allied himself with Solyman. The war, which brought him the first great check of his career in the ill-fated invasion of Provence, ended once more in a temporary agreement at Aigues-Mortes in July 1538, and in a parade of friendship which was only skin-deep. The uncertainty of this friendship, the continued fear of Solyman, the adherence of the new rulers of Ducal Saxony and Electoral Brandenburg (Joachim II.), as well as the King of Denmark, to the Schmalkald League, the probability that the young Duke of Jülich-Cleves, who had increased his territory by the incorporation of Guelders and Zutphen, whose sister, Anne, was the wife of Henry VIII., and whose power was a menace to the Netherlands, would follow their example, impelled him to continue the policy of conciliating the Protestant party. To this end he had sent his vice-chancellor, Held, to Germany on the outbreak of the war with Francis (July 1536). The vice-chancellor, who was a fervent Catholic and an ex-member of the Kammergericht, had, however, been directed to act in co-operation with King Ferdinand in the prosecution of this conciliatory policy, and Ferdinand, it appeared, was not disposed to abet it. Hence the intransigeant attitude adopted by Held towards the League on the right of the

Reichskammergericht to dispose of ecclesiastical lawsuits, etc., and his ultimate attempt to engineer a counter Romanist League at Nürnberg (June 1538).[1]

He had, in consequence, only succeeded in arousing the alarm and intensifying the hostility of the Protestants, and Charles now substituted the Archbishop of Lund, who, at a conference at Frankfort, agreed to suspend the jurisdiction of the Reichskammergericht in ecclesiastical suits for six months in favour of all professing the Augsburg Confession, and to submit the further consideration of the religious question to a committee of theologians and laymen at a Diet to be convened for this purpose (April 1539). The papal plan of a General Council was thus ignored in favour of a German national assembly. This concession was a distinct victory for the League, inasmuch as it held out the prospect of arriving at a religious settlement independently of Rome.[2]

Charles was, however, not prepared to go this length in prosecution of his policy of conciliation, and in the conferences which followed at Hagenau, Worms, and Ratisbon (1540-41), the Pope took care to bring his influence to bear on the negotiations by means of his Nuncio, Morone, and subsequently, of his legates, Campeggio and Contarini, although it cost him an effort to bring himself to recognise thereby the right of a secular assembly to discuss and decide a religious question, and to treat with heretics on equal terms. That of Hagenau, which met in June 1540, was but a preliminary skirmish, which ended merely in the resolution[3] to continue the discussion at

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[1] On Held's mission, see W. Friedensburg, "Nunciaturberichte aus Deutschland," ii. 29 f.; Rosenberg, "Der Kaiser und die Protestanten," 1537-39 (1903); Ranke, "Deutsche Geschichte," iv. 100 f. Ranke erred in representing Held as acting entirely on his own responsibility and contrary to the Emperor's instructions. The imperial policy was subject to the co-operation of Ferdinand, and Held was, therefore, in reality carrying out, in the letter, if not perhaps in the spirit, his instructions in thus acting in accordance with the wishes of Ferdinand.

[2] Walch, xvii. 396 f.; Ranke, iv. 122-134; Moses, "Die Religionsverhandlungen zu Hagenau und Worms," 1540-41, 2 f. (1889).

[3] Cardauns, "Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland," v., vi., Introd., 84 f. (1909); Moses, 45.

Worms in the following autumn, when the Protestants were represented by Melanchthon, Bucer, Capito, and Calvin; the Catholics by Eck, Cochlaeus, and others. Thanks to the persistent efforts of Morone to frustrate an agreement likely to be detrimental to the papal authority, three months were wasted in wearisome and wordy discussion over procedure, and it was not till 14th January 1541 that the theologians got to grips once more over the Augsburg Confession, as emended by Melanchthon. Eck and Melanchthon, who, apparently under Calvin's influence, showed much more spirit at Worms than at Augsburg, debated the question of original sin for four days before they came to the conclusion that the Protestant and the Catholic view was identical. In spite of this auspicious beginning, Granvella, the imperial representative, abruptly put an end to further debate by adjourning the discussion to a Diet at Ratisbon, which the Emperor intended to open in person.[4]

For the third time Charles was constrained to concern himself in the presence of the Estates of the empire with a movement whose adherents he would rather have crushed than courted, had he been free to do so. His real attitude is to be judged, not from the conciliatory phraseology with which he opened the Diet of Ratisbon in the beginning of April 1541,[5] but from the edict which he had launched against the Protestants of the Netherlands in the previous September, and which decreed death to the heretics. Fortunately for the German Protestants, he could not afford to do in Germany what he had no hesitation in doing in his hereditary dominions. From the Diet of Worms onwards, political necessity had frustrated his hostility to the Lutherans, and the fear of the Turk and the French king once more compelled him to veil his orthodoxy in a plausible profession of conciliation towards the heretics. In the policy of conciliation he was aided by the party of reform within the Church, which the evangelical reformation had developed, and which found a supporter in the papal legate Contarini as well as in Gropper, the Chancellor of Hermann von Wied, the reforming Archbishop of Cologne, and the Imperial Councillor Veltwyk. Men like Contarini and Gropper, in contrast to an Aleander and an Eck, were prepared to modify, to some extent, the doctrine, as well as reform the practical abuses of the Church, in sympathy with the evangelical reaction from the theology of the Middle Ages.

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[4] "Corp. Ref.," iii. 1122 f., and iv. 1 f., particularly 33-91; Cardauns, "Nuntiaturberichte," v., vi., Introd., 95 f.; Korte, "Die Konzilspolitik Karls V. in den Jahren 1538-43," 2 ("Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte," 1905); Cardauns, "Geschichte der Kirchlichen Unions und Reformbestrebungen, 1538-42" (1910); Moses neglects to deal with the Worms Conference, although he includes it in the title of his work.

[5] See his speech in "Corp. Ref.," iv. 151-154.

On the Protestant side the policy of conciliation had by this time a zealous advocate in the Landgrave Philip, its former militant antagonist, who, from personal and by no means creditable motives, was eager to cultivate the Emperor's goodwill. With the reluctant consent of Luther and Melanchthon, he had taken a second wife without, like Henry VIII., securing a divorce from his first, and had thereby made himself liable to a capital charge for bigamy. In his anxiety to shield himself from the consequences of his deplorable offence against both law and morality, he was strenuously endeavouring to ingratiate himself with the Emperor by furthering the imperial policy of conciliation. The man who had left Augsburg rather than countenance any composition with the Romanists, was now, from this discreditable motive, the foremost of its advocates. Hence the alertness with which he had supported the secret discussions in which Bucer and Capito had engaged with Gropper and Veltwyk during the Worms colloquy, and which had resulted in the composition of a doctrinal compromise. This compromise, known as the "Regensburg Book,"[6] was now presented to the theologians of both sides, nominated by the Emperor, as a basis for the public debate between them. With the policy of compromise which it embodied, neither the Saxon Elector John Frederick, nor Luther, nor Melanchthon, was by any means satisfied. The Elector stood firmly by the evangelical doctrines [7] and kept away from the Diet, though he sent his representatives and theologians to take part in its deliberations. Luther had no liking for the policy of shaping theological views to suit political exigencies,[8] and Melanchthon preferred the Augsburg Confession as a basis of discussion. Moreover, under the influence of Calvin, Melanchthon was far less disposed than formerly to explain away the principles of the Reformation for the sake of gaining the imperial protection, and bore the opportunist Landgrave a bitter grudge [9] for the infatuated step to which, along with Luther, he had given a reluctant assent, and which threatened to involve both reformers in disgrace, as well as bring disaster to the Protestant cause. He was, too, overawed by the uncompromising spirit of the Elector John Frederick, who, on this occasion, exercised a strict supervision over his conduct through his representatives at the Diet, which he declined to attend himself.

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[6] For the origin of the "Regensburg Book," see Eells, *Princeton Theological Review*, July 1928. This document was practically a reproduction of a number of articles which had been drawn up by Gropper during the Worms colloquy and secretly discussed with Bucer and Capito, whose suggestions it incorporated. It had been subsequently emended by the Landgrave and various scholars. *Ibid.*, 371. In its final form the "Liber Ratisbonensis" is given in "Corp. Ref.,"

It was, therefore, in no compliant mood that, along with Bucer and Pistorius, Melanchthon (27th April 1541) once more took upon himself the task of debating this compromise with Eck, Pflug, Gropper, under the presidency of Granvella and the Elector Palatine, into a final agreement between the two parties. They found little difficulty in reaching unanimity on the first four articles in reference to the fall, free will, and original sin. There was more sparring over the doctrine of justification before the Catholic theo-

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iv. 190 f. On the Landgrave's change of front, see Lenz., "Briefwechsel Landgraf Philipp's mit Bucer," i. 490 f.; ii. 1 f. He gives the agreement concluded with the Emperor in June 1541, iii. 91 f. See also Eells, "Bucer and the Bigamy of Philip of Hesse," 132 f. (1924); Egelhaaf, "Landgraf Philip von Hessen," 20 f. (1904).

[7] See his letter to Luther, Melanchthon, Jonas, etc., in Enders, xiii. 255-256, and "Corp. Ref.," iv. 123 f. See also Vetter, "Die Religionsverhandlungen auf dem Reichstage zu Regensburg," 7 f. (1889).

[8] Enders, xiii. 267-268, 288-289.

[9] "Corp. Ref.," iv. 186.

logians agreed to ascribe justification to faith in Christ's merits, and the Lutherans admitted the addition of a living operative faith, showing itself in love, as part of the process. The Roman Catholics conceded a good deal in placing faith in the foreground. But the formula did not go the length of Luther's cardinal doctrine of justification by faith alone. It did not make of justification a definite experience by which God pardons in virtue of faith in the merits of Christ alone, and neither the Elector nor Luther was satisfied with it. "We hold," wrote Luther to the Elector, "that man is justified by faith without the works of the law; this is our formula, and to this we adhere. It is short and clear. Let the devil and Eck and whoever will, storm against it."[10] At the same time, he bade the anxious Elector not to worry over the matter. The debate would not get much further before the two sides would reach the inevitable deadlock.[11] And Luther's foresight was amply justified by the sequel. No amount of hair-splitting could bring the two sides into line on such questions as transubstantiation, the Mass, the Divine Right of the Pope, the infallibility of General Councils. To deny the ability of the priest to change the elements of the Lord's Supper into the actual Body and Blood of Christ, was to rob the priesthood of its sacerdotal power, which it regarded as an essential of the priestly office. To oppose to the claim of the Pope and the hierarchy, to be the infallible arbiter of truth, the right to test truth by the Scripture and the reason and conscience of the individual, was to cut the roots of the mediæval principle of ecclesiastical authority. The difference in this case was practical as well as theological. It vitally affected the interests of the clergy as a class, and concession could only be made at the expense of revolutionising institutions as well as doctrine. It would mean a virtual surrender to the enemy, and such a surrender Contarini and his fellow-theologians, even after the elimination of the irreconcilable Eck, who retired from the debate, could not afford to make. He had, in fact, exceeded his instructions in the concessions he was fain to admit, for which he was sharply called to account by the Curia, and which it was determined not to sanction.[12] Its real attitude towards the heretic is reflected, not in the well-meaning efforts of a Contarini to reconcile the irreconcilable, but in the steps it was taking to revive the Roman Inquisition during the session of the Ratisbon Diet.[13] On the other hand, Melanchthon was equally inflexible, and in a series of counter-articles strenuously maintained the Protestant principle.[14]

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[10] Enders, xiii. 342 (May 1541).

[11] Within about a fortnight after the date of Luther's letter to the Elector (10th May), a Consistory at Rome, to which Contarini had sent the article on "Justification," rejected it (27th May), and declared strongly against any concessions to the Protestants, Vetter, 106-107.

In this deadlock the Emperor was fain to accede to the proposal of the Elector of Brandenburg, Joachim II., to invoke the intervention of Luther himself. It is a striking testimony to the power of the arch-heretic, whom Charles would have burned in 1521, that he was fain to condescend twenty years later, through the Brandenburg Elector, to sue for the favour of his co-operation in the task of settling the faith. The deputation[15] emphasised the greatness of the concession in the matter of justification, and prayed Luther to approve of the articles on which agreement had been reached, and to agree that toleration should meantime be observed in regard to the matters on which agreement had been found impossible.[16] Luther's reply was so far conciliatory in that he expressed his satisfaction that both sides had been able to agree on the first articles, though he emphasised his own view of justification and free-will. In regard to the others (though he had not read all of them, and held by the counter-articles presented by Melanchthon), he was prepared to tolerate abuses such as communion in one kind and auricular confession, on condition that the articles agreed to should be freely taught by the Roman

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[12] Cardauns, "Nuntiaturberichte," vii., Introd., 18 f. (1912).

[13] *Ibid.*, vii., Introd., 23 f.

[14] See the articles in "Corp. Ref.," iv. 348 f. For a detailed account of the discussions see Vetter, "Religionsverhandlungen," 85 f.

[15] It consisted of Princes John and George of Anhalt, Matthias von der Schulenburg, and the expatriated Scottish theologian, Alex. Alesius.

[16] Enders, xiii. 356 f.; *cf.* "Corp. Ref.," iv. 395-399.

Catholics as well as the Protestants.[17] He let it be clearly seen, however, that he had no confidence in the sincerity of the other side, and towards those who should continue to trifle with what he regarded as the truth and persisted in their error, he would show no toleration. With such, there could only be war. As things stood, this was the only alternative, for neither side had learned to agree to differ. Neither understood the meaning of true toleration, though the moderates of both sides felt the necessity of it. Neither in the circumstances could afford to practise it. Of this lack of tolerance the Romanist majority in the Diet, who followed the Bavarian Dukes William and Ludwig, furnished convincing proof. They refused to accept the above compromise, which Charles, on the 12th July, proposed as the official deliverance of the Diet, pending the final decision of a General or a National Council, or, in the case of the failure of either to meet, another Diet to be convened within eighteen months, with an addition prohibiting the publication of all controversial or vituperative writings on religion under severe penalties.[18] On their side the Protestants declined to be bound by this prohibition,[19] and ultimately, on 29th July, the four months' debate eventuated in a return, pending the meeting of a Council or another Diet, both to the Recess of Augsburg and to the Religious Peace of Nürnberg, which was extended to those who had meanwhile joined the Schmalkald League. The Protestants were, however, held bound by the articles on which agreement had been reached, whilst the Roman Catholics were enjoined to set about a practical reformation of the abuses of the Church.[20]

This patchwork, which recognised the validity of the Augsburg Recess as well as the Nürnberg truce, and debarred the Protestants from resiling from the doctrinal articles agreed on, left the advantage on the Roman Catholic side. But by withholding their assent to an aid against the Turks, the Protestants forced Charles to grant substantial concessions, in a private declaration, relating to ecclesiastical property and the claim to representation in the Reichskammergericht, etc.[21]

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[17] See his written statement in Enders, xiii. 382 f., especially the second form of 12th June, as corrected under the influence of the Elector John Frederick, who urged him to make use of more decisive terms than in the first draft.

[18] Walch, xvii. 912-916, 932-936.

[19] *Ibid.*, xvii. 929.

[20] *Ibid.*, xvii. 962 f., particularly 976-978; "Corp. Ref.," iv. 616-630.

The lengthy negotiation had thus furnished one more demonstration of the impossibility of settling by political manœuvring a conflict which involved divergent principles and tendencies. The two parties had indeed come nearer to each other than ever before, and had Contarini and the moderate Catholics been free to negotiate as Christians and not as Churchmen, the comprehension of both in one Church might have been possible. But Contarini's evangelical sympathies stopped short of the Augsburg Confession,[22] and Melanchthon, with John Frederick, Luther, and Calvin behind him, could not possibly substitute for it even a modified version of the Ratisbon Book. Moreover, as papal legate, he could not, even if he had been willing, jeopardise the interests of the Papacy and the hierarchy with which the Lutherans had definitely broken,[23] and was fain, ultimately, to insist on remitting the controversy to the Pope and a General Council, with whom alone lay the right to decide in matters of faith.[24] In reality, the two parties had only approached from opposite sides a gulf which no amount of ingenuity or even goodwill could bridge over.

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[21] Walch, xvii. 999-1002. Declaration of 29th July 1541. On the Diet of Ratisbon, see besides Vetter, "Die Religionsverhandlungen auf dem Reichstage zu Regensburg," and Cardauns, "Nuntiaturberichte," vii.; Pastor, "Die Correspondenz des Card. Contarini," 1541, "Historisches Jahrbuch von Hueffer," i. 321 f., 473 f. (1880); Brieger, "G. Contarini und das Regensburger Concordienwerk" (1870); Rückert, "Die Theologische Entwicklung Gasp. Contarinis" (1926); Lenz, "Briefwechsel Landgraf Phillipps," iii. 1 f.; Dittrichs, "G. Contarini" (1885).

[22] Contarini had at first professed the Thomist theology. He had, however, latterly been influenced by the incipient evangelical movement in Italy and by the conception of a twofold justification which Gropper propounded in his "Enchiridion Christianæ Institutionis" (1538). See Rückert, "Die Theologische Entwicklung Gasp. Contarinis," 96 f.; *cf.* Seeberg, "Dogmengeschichte," iv. 747 f. (1920); Moeller, "History of the Christian Church," iii. 142 (English translation).

[23] See "Corp. Ref.," iv. 606.

[24] *Ibid.*, iv. 506 and 600.

If Charles had failed to bring the Ratisbon Diet to agree to a religious union, his efforts had not been in vain from the political point of view. If he had failed as a theologian he had scored as a politician, and, after all, the predominant motive on his part in these religious conferences, in spite of specious theological professions, was the political one. He had succeeded by personal concessions in preventing the Protestant princes from listening to the allurements of his rival Francis, who was busy fomenting against him another League which, by the year 1542, included the Sultan, the Duke of Cleves, the Kings of Denmark and Sweden, and enjoyed the active goodwill of the Pope. He had, moreover, by promising the Landgrave Philip immunity from the consequences of his bigamous marriage and holding out the prospect of future favour, transformed the former militant genius of the Schmalkald League and protagonist of its alliance with France into an active adherent. By this defection, to which some have applied the term treachery, and which alienated the Elector of Saxony from the Landgrave, the Schmalkald League was paralysed as an offensive force, and Charles could face the formidable combination engineered by Francis I. without being seriously hampered by the religious schism within the empire, though his prestige had suffered not a little from his disastrous expedition against Algiers in the autumn of 1541. The League remained passive whilst he overran the territory of the Duke of Cleves in 1543, and crushed the Reformation movement which the Duke had inaugurated. At a Diet at Spires in the following year, he succeeded by further concessions in preserving its passive attitude, whilst he carried out his plan of the conquest of France in alliance with Henry VIII. of England. The Pope being the virtual ally of the French king and therefore a political enemy, he even undertook to submit the final settlement of the religious question to a free General or National Council to be held in Germany—independently, that is, of the papal influence—to convene meanwhile another Diet for the purpose of paving the way for this final settlement, to grant representation to the

Protestants in the Imperial Chamber, and to suspend the Augsburg Recess and all other decrees against them (June 1544).[25]

II. THE POLICY OF REPRESSION

In preparation for the further discussion of the religious question by the promised Diet, the Saxon Elector requested the Wittenberg theologians to draw up a statement of the concessions they were prepared to make to the Romanists.[1] Hence "the Wittenberg Reformation" which Melanchthon worked out in consultation with Luther, Bugenhagen, Cruciger, and Major, and which they presented, with their signatures attached, to the Elector on the 14th January 1545.[2] Whilst embodying the concessions in their final form, which the reformers were prepared to make, it sharply defines their divergence from the Roman Church, and retains the distinctive essentials in doctrine and usage, for which they had contended throughout the negotiations with the Emperor since 1530, and which they declared they could not surrender. The document accordingly emphasises anew the Scripture as the norm of true doctrine and usage. In accordance with this fundamental principle the Gospel, as revealed by Christ, has been restored in the Reformed Church, and has found unalloyed expression in the Augsburg Confession, which, they claim, is in harmony with the teaching of Christ and the Apostles and the creeds of the ancient Catholic Church. On the doctrine of saving faith, in particular, there can be no compromise with the errors that have crept into the teaching of the Church. In regard to usages they are ready to compromise to a certain extent, provided that true doctrine is maintained. They are, for instance, prepared to acknowledge episcopal ordination on this cardinal condition—that the bishops shall eliminate the sacrificial conception from the ministerial function and allow clerical marriage. They have retained confession and absolution in the evangelical sense, but they cannot admit the erroneous beliefs and practices connected with the Sacrament of Penance, which have falsified the true doctrine of fiducial faith in Christ, and hindered and martyred the conscience with a " pagan " system of satisfactions for sins. Moreover, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated in both kinds, as instituted by Christ, in accordance with the evangelical Lutheran conception, and the sacrificial character of the rite, along with private Masses and Masses for the dead, be renounced. The worship of the saints, even in the sense of merely invoking their intercession, which has lent itself to crass idolatry, must also go, although it is permissible and serviceable to honour them and remember them as examples for the edification of the Christian life. The obligation of clerical celebacy must be abolished, if only on moral and practical grounds. In regard to the constitution of the Church, the episcopal order may be retained. But the essential feature of the ministerial office is not the hierarchical one, but the pastoral and preaching function, which was instituted by Christ when He gave to the Church prophets, apostles, pastors, and teachers for the preservation of true doctrine and worship and the ministration of the sacraments. That only is the true Church in which this function has been purely exercised, and whose members have the right to elect their ministers by whatever name they are denominated, whether bishops, parsons, or pastors. To their jurisdiction the members are bound to render obedience and to contribute to their maintenance. For the supervision of the clergy and the general government of the Church, the episcopal order in the hierarchical sense, as it had developed in the ancient Church, may be allowed to continue, on condition that the bishops duly perform their office and cease to persecute and play the tyrant over their evangelical brethren. The reformers have no desire to foment disorder or perpetuate schism, and lay the blame for the division and strife in the Church on the bishops, who have sought to repress the true doctrine and have persecuted its adherents. As long as they pursue this course, there can be no recognition of their authority on the part of the evangelical ministers. This ministry does not rest on human authority, but on the institution of Christ, and only on condition that the bishops maintain true doctrine and the right use of the sacraments will they submit to their jurisdiction. An indispensable preliminary of such submission is a thorough reformation of the episcopal order and administration, and on this condition they are prepared to leave them and the cathedral chapters in possession of ecclesiastical endowments. Similarly, the ecclesiastical courts or consistories must be reformed in the interest of discipline, and to this end competent laymen of all classes shall participate, along with the clergy, as judges in causes coming under their jurisdiction. Nothing is said of the Papacy, and though its existence may be assumed as part of the episcopal order, it is evident that, if it is to be retained, it too must share in this drastic reformation. Finally, the schools and universities shall be subjected to a more thorough supervision in the interest alike of education and religion, and monastic vows abolished, though a number of the monasteries may be retained as voluntary training schools of youth.

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[25] Walch, xvii. 1234-1242; Druffel, "Kaiser Karl V. und die Römische Curie, 1544-46," "Abhandlungen der Königl. Bayerischen Academie der Wissenschaften," xiii. 147 f. (1875).

[1] Enders-Kawerau, xvi. 113-114, 20th Nov. 1544.

[2] It is given by Sehling, "Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen," i. 209 f.

The document, apart from its strongly dogmatic standpoint, breathes a genuine spirit of moderation and conciliation, and its calm and restrained style is in keeping with this spirit. In this respect it is characteristically Melanchthonian, and studiously avoids the pugnative and provocative tone of Luther's controversial writings. "The theologians," wrote Chancellor Brück, "have couched their 'Reformation' in very mild terms, and there is no trace of Luther's boisterous spirit in it."[3] Its concession to the episcopal order is a remarkable tribute to its authors' liberality, and has been construed as a reactionary admission on their part of the necessity of the episcopal government of the Church. In reality it is no more than a recognition of the necessity of compromise on this question, if anything like a feasible accommodation with their episcopal opponents was to be attained—an attempt to meet the hierarchy half-way on the constitutional issue. The reformers, in

[3] "Corp. Ref.," v. 661.

this final attempt at compromise, will go the length of accepting the old hierarchical order in return for its drastic practical reformation. Moreover, their concession to the bishops was conditioned by the concession of the bishops to them in the matter of doctrine, which they demand in the most explicit and even intolerant terms, and in insisting on this concession, which they knew would not be granted, they virtually cancelled their own. In their covering letter to the Elector, in fact, they frankly admit that they have no hope that this compromise will be accepted. At the same time, they claim that, in view of the concessions they are ready to make for the sake of peace, the responsibility for the continuance of the schism cannot be laid at their door, and that they cannot justly be accused of seeking to maintain it from any self-seeking desire to deprive the bishops of their legitimate power or their possessions.[4] In the sequel their scepticism as to any practical result from this final overture was destined to prove only too well-founded.

The invasion of France, for which the concessions made by the Emperor at Spires, by securing his rear from a possible Protestant attack, paved the way, proved a difficult operation. In spite of his advance within striking distance of Paris, he was fain to make a bargain with Francis I. (Treaty of Crêpy, September 1544) and leave his English ally in the lurch to keep the French king busy, whilst he retired across the frontier to settle accounts with the Turks and the Lutherans.

The bargain with Francis I. included a secret agreement as to their co-operation in the suppression of heresy.[5] The heretics were, of course, the Lutheran princes, whom both had been eager enough to court in accordance with the exigencies of policy. Both were, indeed, still hampered by other pressing anxieties—Francis by the conflict with Henry VIII., Charles by that with Solyman. Until he could make an arrangement with Solyman, which did not occur till December 1545, he was not free to grapple finally with the religious question in Germany. On a final solution he was now, however, fully resolved—either by means of the General Council, which Pope Paul was at last forced, by the peace with his rival, to convene to Trent in the spring of 1545, or by the sword.[6] He was still obliged to temporise at the Diet which met at Worms at the same time, and at which the Lutherans refused to grant a subsidy against the Turks, unless a free Council was substituted for that of Trent. On the other hand, Paul III. offered, through his legate, Cardinal Farnese, to provide a subsidy for the war against the heretics (June 1545).[7] On ultimate war Charles was now bent, though he continued to engage the Protestants in further negotiations on the religious question[8] (second Conference at Ratisbon between the theologians), pending the completion of his preparations for the final struggle and the signing of a formal "Capitulation" with the Pope (June 1546).[9]

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[4] Enders-Kawerau, xvi. 165.

[5] See the agreement in Joachim Müller, "Die Politik Kaiser Karls V. am Trienter Konzil im Jahre 1545," "Z.K.G.," 1925, 238-239, 411 f.; Druffel, "Abhandlungen," xiii. 201.

His motives in finally deciding for war were more political than religious. In spite of the weakening of the Schmalkald League as a political force, Protestantism had been making further substantial inroads on Roman Catholicism in Germany during the previous five years. In 1542 the Elector and the Landgrave attacked the most zealous, if least respectable champion of the Church, Duke Henry of Brunswick, who certainly could ill afford to throw stones at the Landgrave on the score of morality, and against whom Luther directed one of his coarsest and most furious philippics.[10] They expelled him from his duchy, and subsequently threw him into prison, and set Bugenhagen to work to evangelise it. The Elector further laid forcible hands on the bishoprics of Naumburg, of which he made Amsdorf bishop, and Meissen, which he was forced to divide with his Protestant cousin, Duke Maurice of Saxony, who in turn seized the bishopric of Merseburg and conferred the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of it on Prince George of Anhalt. Still more serious, the Elector-Archbishop of Cologne, Hermann Von Wied, who had gradually approximated to the Lutheran theology, decided, with the help of Melanchthon and Bucer, to evangelise his electorate, and his example was followed, from purely worldly motives, by his suffragan, Franz Von Waldeck, Bishop of Münster, Minden, and Osnabrück. Another Elector, he of the Palatinate, adopted the same policy. On the very eve of the great disaster to the Protestant cause, the greater part of Germany seemed to be irrevocably lost to the old Church. Even in Austria and Bavaria a large proportion of nobles and people were more in sympathy with Luther than with the Pope. Of the greater princes, secular and ecclesiastical, only the rulers of Austria and Bavaria and the spiritual Electors of Mainz and Treves stood for the old faith. Four of the Electors were now Protestants, and this was a fact of the greatest import to the Hapsburg dynasty, for it gave the Protestants a majority of electoral votes and held out the prospect that the next Emperor might be a Protestant. Moreover, the Reformation movement had strengthened enormously the territorial power of the princes, and though Romanist as well as Protestant rulers had profited from the process of secularisation, the swing of the pendulum in favour of Protestantism had intensified the trend towards particularism, and threatened the complete eclipse of the imperial power as well as the Emperor's dynastic ambitions.

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[6] Friedensburg, "Nuntiaturberichte," viii. 29 f. (1898).

[7] Druffel, "Abhandlungen," xvi. 24-25 (1881); Friedensburg, "Nuntiaturberichte," viii. 37 f.

[8] Müller, "Die Politik Kaiser Karls," "Z.K.G.," 1925, 347 f.; Druffel, "Abhandlungen," xix. 459 f. (1890).

[9] Friedensburg, "Nuntiaturberichte," viii. 50 f.; ix. 8 f. (1899); Bezold, "Deutsche Reformation," 757-758, 767-768; Armstrong, "Charles V.," ii. 119-126.

[10] Wider Hans Worst, "Werke," li. 469 f. (1541).

It was considerations of this political nature, as well as zeal for orthodoxy, that helped to stiffen the resolution at last to strike at the chief Lutheran leaders, the Elector and the Landgrave, now that the opportune moment seemed to have arrived. Charles's tactic was to try to lure them into an illusion as to his real purpose, whilst he journeyed with a scant following from the Netherlands to Ratisbon, where he could concentrate his Spanish and Italian troops. Another essential of it was to isolate, as far as possible, the Elector and the Landgrave from their fellow-Protestants. This was comparatively easy in view of the demoralisation of the Schmalkald League, whose members had too long been pursuing selfish and personal purposes, and which had in vain attempted, at a meeting at Frankfurt in December-February 1545-46, to galvanise its lukewarm and divided energy. The Reformation had, in fact, ceased to be the great wave of national and spiritual emancipation of the early enthusiastic period of its history. The doctrinal quarrels of its theological leaders, their dependence on their princely patrons, the jealous and self-aggrandising spirit of these petty rulers, the constant intermingling of religion and politics, the growing subsidence of moral power beneath the profession of theological belief, had impaired both its solidarity and its grandeur as a reaction from the intolerable evils, national and religious, for which the Papacy had its own share of responsibility. The opportunist spirit of the Protestant princes played the most effectively into the Emperor's hands. It enabled him to secure the neutrality of the Elector of Brandenburg, and, even more important, the co-operation of Duke Maurice of Saxony, who was on bad terms with his electoral cousin, John Frederick, and yielded to the lust of his cousin's dignity and territory, which were to be the reward of his treachery. Several of the lesser Protestant princes from similar motives of self-interest or friction, went over to the imperial side. Charles assured himself, too, of the help of the old enemy of the Hapsburg dynasty, the Duke of Bavaria, whose Roman Catholic zeal had been balanced by his personal interest, which had led him to cultivate the Elector and the Landgrave on occasion. Hatred of the princely power secured him the co-operation of a large section of the nobility, who had not forgotten the blow to the interests of their order dealt by the Landgrave in the conflict with Sickingen. Thus forearmed by skilful diplomacy, he threw down the gauntlet to his two chief Protestant antagonists on the pretext of vindicating the imperial authority and justice against the princely rebels, who, in the name of religion,[11] had presumed to trample upon both. This declaration, he told his sister Mary and his son Philip, was only the ostensible *casus belli* adduced in order to keep the other Protestants in countenance. His real object, he further assured them, was the vindication of the faith against its subverters.[12] This was, of course, but a partial statement of the case. In a previous letter to his sister,[13] he had emphasised the political argument in favour of war, which, in the letters of a few weeks later, he seems to have forgotten. The growth of territorialism, the interests of the Hapsburg dynasty in Germany, the menace of a Protestant Germany to his Netherland possessions, contributed materially to turn the scales in favour of paralysing, if not suppressing outright, the Lutheran heresy in the persons of its most formidable representatives.

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[11] This representation of the motives of the Elector of Saxony and even Landgrave Philip is certainly one-sided. John Frederick was undoubtedly a sincerely religious man according to his lights, and even Philip's religious profession was not necessarily a mere sham. For a fair estimate of him see Egelhaaf, "Landgraf Philip," 37 f.

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[12] See Armstrong, ii. 132-133.

[13] *Ibid.*, ii. 125.

CHAPTER V

FINAL CONTROVERSY WITH ROME

I. Polemic against the Papacy

Luther's combativeness grew with the increasing years. He maintained the battle with Rome to the end. During the last decade of his life, his aversion for the Papacy increased rather than decreased in violence. His pen warfare shows, in fact, an almost morbid hatred of Rome. He allowed it to overmaster his reason and to betray him into some of the worst excesses of controversial acrimony and vehemence. The controversial habit had grown with the years, and along with it the tendency to indulge in exaggerated, vituperative, violent, and even vulgar outbursts. He became increasingly irascible, contentious, and intolerant of opposition to his will. This failing was due, in part, to the state of his health, which the tremendous strain of the previous twenty-five years of conflict had seriously impaired. Not that this chronic ill-health materially lessened the strength and vigour of his intellect, or the supreme command of expression which appear in unabated measure in these latter-day effusions of his mighty pen. His mind is as incisive, his dialectic as resourceful as ever. In this respect he remains " a bonnie fighter " to the end. At the same time the irritability, the pessimism, the doctrinairism, which these chronic attacks of illness tended to aggravate, have left their mark on these later productions, and whilst they add to their vigour, they certainly detract somewhat from the force of the appeal of these productions for the modern reader.

In 1537 he published a translation of the so-called Donation of Constantine,[1] as incorporated in the Canon Law, in vindication of his irreconcilable antagonism to the Papacy. He blasts it as "a shameful, desperate, and wicked lie." This lie, which the Germans have so long reverenced as a truth, is a convincing proof that, in attacking this monstrous system, he has not been warring against God and His Church, but defending the truth against the devil and his accursed brood. He accompanies the translation with a running commentary, and adds a long and scathing criticism of this unspeakable forgery. With the help of Valla's critical notes, of which, as we have noted, Hutten had published a new edition in 1520, he pounds it to pieces in his most drastic fashion. In virtue of this impudent forgery, which the popes esteem the most important article of the Christian faith, they have posed as emperors and gods on earth, and every one who has doubted or refused to believe it, has been treated as the worst of heretics, as happened to Laurentius Valla, for example. To it we owe the struggle between the mediæval popes and emperors, especially between that prince of rascals, Boniface VIII. and Philip IV. of France. Hence, too, the claim of feudal superiority over England, Naples, Sicily, and other kingdoms, which has cost the nations untold bloodshed and misery. Hence, farther, the striving to exploit Christendom for the support of their diabolic ambition, which saw in the nations, and especially the Germans, a set of geese and ducks to be fooled and devoured in God's name.

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[1] Einer aus den hohen Artikeln des päpstlichen Glaubens, genant Donatio Constantini, " Werke," l. 69 f.; Erlangen ed., 25, 176 f.

In demonstration of this fact, he reviews anew, as in the "Address to the Nobility," the extortionate devices by which Rome robs and ruins the nations. "From this it is evident how, out of the Papacy, founded on sheer lies and idolatry, has grown a real empire of the devil, to the destruction, not only of the Christian churches, but of the kingdoms of the world." [2] For the purpose of his indictment, gossip as well as fact about the popes is fair prey. At the same time, he shows convincingly from the testimony of the Fathers that this wicked lie cannot stand the test of historic criticism. What audacity, therefore, to make of this devil's lie an article of faith and burn people for not accepting it and refusing to worship the Pope as if he were God Himself.[3] In his audacity he has even gone the length of claiming that the Roman See does not derive its force from the Scriptures, but that the Scriptures derive their force from the Roman See. "This is in very deed to exalt himself above God and against God."[4] His indignation at the distortion of Christianity, which this lie has bolstered up, betrays him, in conclusion, into one of his fiercest outbursts against the Pope and the hierarchy. "If God would give them grace to recognise, repent, and reform such unspeakable rascality, they would themselves share Luther's judgment that the whole pack of them—Pope, cardinals, bishops—should be strung up on the gallows, drowned, beheaded, and burned, as arch-thieves, robbers, deceivers, traitors, incendiaries, bloodhounds, and authors and finishers of all wickedness. I myself, alas, was once among the blasphemous bands of the papal Church, and have helped to blaspheme and dishonour the holy blood of Christ and His grace by my own holiness and wisdom. Like Paul, I did not know better. But they now know it and, nevertheless, remain in this wicked system, and even defend it with all their might and with all the force of persecution."[5] Pity that he did not now know better and allow the solid arguments which he adduces against this fabrication to speak for themselves, without the vituperation with which he so wildly overlays them. The vindication of truth against falsehood, of freedom against tyranny, which otherwise finds forcible expression in this exposure, could well afford to dispense with such riotous declamation.

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[2] "Werke," 80.

Roman tyranny is also the theme of another piece written in the same year.[6] All tyrannies are but as shadows compared with that of Rome. The rule of Attila and Tamerlane are in this respect but child's play. The Roman pontiffs since the days of Charlemagne, on whom they pretend to have conferred the empire, have striven to make themselves the superiors of emperors and kings and lord of lords. By excommunication, by every kind of trick and fraud they have encroached on the secular power. All they could not seize they have stolen, and what they could not steal they have extorted.[7] In the papal court they practise only how to deceive, to lie, to rob, to play the wolf and the fox, which nowadays they call "to Romanise" (*Romanari*).[8]

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[3] "Werke," 85.
[4] *Ibid.*, 86.
[5] *Ibid.*, 88.
[6] Appendix to the Disputation of Joannis Nannis, De Monarchia Papæ, "Werke," l. 102 f.

The Bull of Paul III., in the same year, conferring a plenary indulgence for a war against the Turks, gave him an additional opportunity of trouncing the Pope. He published the Bull with a series of biting comments.[9] If the popes had not used their usurped power to sow discord among Christian kings for their own selfish interest, the Turk would have been no danger to Christendom. The papal proclamation of a crusade has become a mere device for collecting money for Rome. In another piece[10] of the same year, full of grim humour as well as cutting satire, he represents Beelzebub, the prince of devils, inditing an epistle to the Pope and the Curia, exhorting them, in the conventional official style, to be diligent in practising all the diabolic arts fitted to maintain his rule in the city and the world. It has come to the ears of Beelzebub that the Pope is proposing to reform the papal court in Rome, "the chief residence of his satanic majesty," and to alienate the whole city from its allegiance to him and transfer it to Luther. Beelzebub, in his best official style, expresses his indignation at this treachery during his absence from the city on the business of fighting on behalf of the Pope and the cardinals against the Lutherans. He comforts himself with the reflection that the reform, which his legate, Belial, has reported to him, is meant only to hoodwink kings and peoples, and especially these German blockheads. It is, therefore, his wish and command that they should proceed with this laudable humbug. Should, however, it turn out that there is any truth in the report, let them know that he will destroy Rome, which is built on the mouth of hell, with fire and brimstone, and give it over to the wrath of the Lutherans. To make sure that they will faithfully remain in their old allegiance, he makes known his intention of returning to his chief residence, and accompanying them to the General Council at Mantua, in order that the rebellious Lutherans may be uprooted and destroyed.

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[7] "Werke," 104.

[8] *Ibid.*, 105.

[9] Bulla papæ Pauli Tertii, mit Nachwort und Randglossen, "Werke," l. 113 f.

[10] Beelzebub an die heilige päpstliche Kirche, "Werke," l. 128 f.

His distrust of the papal desire to reform the Church, which had hitherto proved but an empty profession, had become by this time a fixed idea. Accordingly he saw nothing but guile and deception in the reform scheme which Contarini and the members of a reform commission, nominated by Paul III. in 1536, had debated into shape.[11] He gave unstinted expression to his scepticism in the preface and notes with which he furnished his translation of the document into German.[12] His long struggle with his Romanist antagonists had convinced him that nothing good could come out of Rome, and it must be admitted that, with the exception of Hadrian VI., the more immediate predecessors of Paul III. had done their best to substantiate this conviction. They had allowed such a disgraceful state of things to prevail at Rome and throughout the Church, that his contention that the Papacy could not reform itself was substantially justified. Moreover, without his heroic effort to put an end to the scandal of an unreformed Papacy and Church, there would have been, as far as we can see, a continuance of the old disreputable state of things. Nor was there much ground for assuming that a Paul III. intended to improve upon his predecessors in this respect, and seriously attempt to carry out the scheme of the commission. As far as a practical reformation of the abuses rampant in the Curia and the Church was concerned, it turned out to be so much waste paper. The Pope was a product of the old evil system under which he had attained to affluence and high dignity by the usual self-seeking methods. As cardinal he had by no means been a model of priestly virtue, and as the father of a number of illegitimate children, it was his main striving as Pope to promote their interests. As the self-seeking character of his pontificate shows, Luther did him no great injustice in denying him any real intention to put down the corruption and misrule rampant in the Curia and the Church, and in contending that the profession of zeal for reform would end in "a reformation of that great rascal, Nobody."[13] But he certainly carried his scepticism too far in describing a Contarini, a Sadoleto, and a Pole, who were the moving spirits of the reform movement, as "desperate knaves who would reform the Church with fox-tails,"[14] and thus make out a plausible case for not holding a real reforming Council. To say the least, this was a very jaundiced estimate of a document which frankly exposes in ample detail the degeneration of the Curia and the Church, and urges the imperative necessity of their drastic reformation, and which Luther ought rather to have welcomed as a striking vindication of his own work as a reformer.

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[11] Consilium de emendanda Ecclesia (1537).

[12] "Werke," l. 288 f.

To strengthen the distrust of the papal intention and confirm the people in their resistance to the papal tyranny is the object of another of these characteristic effusions, in which he gave extracts in Latin and German from Pope Hadrian's missive to the Diet of Nürnberg (1522-23), and from the Diet's statement of grievances against the papal régime.[15] To these extracts he contributes, besides a running commentary, a preface reminding the Germans of their deliverance from the crushing papal misrule and extortion, and exhorting them to beware of being again entangled in the old diabolic bondage by these crafty rogues at Rome, who have suddenly turned respectable, and are striving to swindle the world into the belief in a Roman reformation.

Unlike these effusions, the treatise on "Councils and Churches"[16] is an elaborate attempt to deal with the subject in the light of the historical evidence relative to it. It is the fruit of a special, though hardly an exhaustive study of the available sources, ancient and modern. He claims to have a more accurate and intimate knowledge of the history of the ancient Councils and the writings of the Fathers than his opponents.[17] Nor was the claim an empty boast. He had already, as a student of the scholastic theology, dipped into Augustine and Jerome, and amplified his knowledge of these and other Fathers in connection with his exegetical lectures as professor of Holy Writ, and the long series of his controversial writings as a reformer. Since his appeal from the Pope to a General Council and the debate with Eck at Leipzig, the question of the power and rights of a General Council had been in the forefront of the controversy with his opponents. From the Diet of Nürnberg in 1523 onwards, it had constantly figured in the negotiations of the Diet and the Emperor as the grand expedient for the settlement of the controversy which Paul III., after the abortive offer of Clement VII. in 1533,[18] was fain to adopt in 1536. He had thus been compelled by the exigencies of this long controversy to have recourse to the sources at his command, such as the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in the Latin translations of Rufinus, the Tripartite History of Cassiodorus, Gratian's collection of the Canon Law, Platina's "History of the Popes,"[19] and the patristic writings. In addition to the older works at his disposal, he had the advantage of consulting "The History of All Councils from the Apostles to the Present Time,"[20] of the Franciscan monk, Crabbe, in September 1538, which he mentions with approval, though without naming the author.[21] His claim to a special knowledge of the subject was thus substantially founded, judged from the standpoint of the historical scholarship of his time, if not from that of later research. The work is professedly an appeal to history as the test of the truth in this matter, though it is inevitably strongly influenced by his bias against the Papacy, and is by no means immaculate in the statement or interpretation of facts. As the fruit of this special study, it reflects the mature conclusions to which this study has led him, and while rather verbose and diffuse in style,[22] it is comparatively free from the vituperation of his later polemic against the Papacy. In this respect the historian is decidedly superior to the theologian. It was meant to be the master stroke against "the Roman Beast and his kingdom,"[23] which he had been meditating and preparing for several years before it left the press in the spring of 1539.[24] It takes the form of a demonstration from history that the true foundation of the Church is not the ancient Councils and the Fathers, but the Scriptures; that the first four General Councils only declared the faith as taught in the Scriptures; that in matters of faith their powers were strictly limited by this fundamental principle; and that only a Council representing the true Church, of which he gives his own conception, as against the false papal Church, can bring about a real reformation.

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[13] "Werke," l. 290. [14] *Ibid.*, l. 290. [15] *Ibid.*, l. 355 f. (1538).

[16] Von den Concilien und Kirchen, "Werke," l. 509 f., with an elaborate introduction by Cohn and Brenner, *ibid.*, l. 488 f.

[17] *Ibid.*, l. 519, 543.

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[18] See Pastor, "History of the Popes," x. 220 f.

[19] Historia de Vitis Pontificum, from the Apostle Peter to Paul II.

[20] Concilia Omnia tam generalia quam particularia.

[21] "Werke," l. 514.

[22] Luther himself recognised its defects in this respect, which he attributed to lack of time and strength. In a letter to Melanchthon,

He reiterates at the outset his scepticism as to the papal offer of a Reform Council, which reminds him of the dodge by which a man offers a morsel of meat on the point of a knife to a dog, and when the dog snaps at it, hits him on the snout with the handle. For wellnigh twenty years the Pope has practised this dodge on the good Emperor Charles.[25] Nothing is farther from the intention of the Pope and the bishops than to reform the Church by means of a Council, and in this sense the Council, which Paul III. has summoned, has been closed before it has been opened.[26] It only remains for Christians to help themselves and reform the Church without, and in spite of, the Pope.[27] Moreover, as he proceeds to show in the first part, no reformation modelled on the decisions of the ancient Councils or the views of the Fathers would be practicable or adequate, let alone one undertaken by a Council dominated by the Pope. In view of this fact it is useless to appeal for such a reforma-

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14th March 1539, he expresses his dissatisfaction and speaks of it as tam tenue et verbosum, Enders, xii. 115.

[23] Enders, xi. 209-210, 28th Feb. 1537.

[24] *Ibid.*, xii. 115.

[25] Not quite accurately, since it was only in 1533 that Clement VII. agreed to call a Council on certain conditions, which the Protestants would not accept.

[26] "Werke," l. 509-510.

[27] *Ibid.*, l. 512-514.

tion. For one thing, the Pope, cardinals, and bishops would never entertain the idea, since it would be fatal to the Papacy and the accepted institutions of the Church.[28] Moreover, why go to the ancient Councils and Fathers for a reformation, when we have the Scriptures as the true fountain from which to drink, as St Bernard has it? In this matter "the Scripture must be master and judge."[29] For the Councils and Fathers are not in unison. Both of them, in fact, are often downright contradictory, and if we take them as infallible guides, what disputation and quarrelling would ensue? Who will be the arbiter of such a contention? Canonists like Gratian who have tried to make a concordance of those discordants are, as the civil jurists say, mere asses. Augustine, indeed, expresses his high esteem for the first two General Councils of Nicæa and Constantinople. But he wrote without personal knowledge, since he only became a Christian posterior to them, and in any case these and the other ancient Councils afford no evidence in support of the claim of the later popes to dominate both Council and Church. They were summoned by the emperors, not by the bishops of Rome, who only at a later time succeeded in their striving to absorb this right, and foisted on the Church of the West their absolute will in accordance with the maxim, *Sic volo sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas*.[30] As to the Fathers, Augustine disclaims for his own writings infallibility, refuses this attribute to those of other Fathers, and ascribes supreme authority only to the Scriptures.[31]

He then examines in detail the history of the ancient Church in order to substantiate his contention that, in view of the temporary character of many of the decisions of these Councils, including that of the Apostles at Jerusalem—due to the circumstances of the time and the contradictory views held by the Fathers on questions like the rebaptism of heretics—it is impossible to look to them as infallible guides of a reformation of the Church in the sixteenth century. Only in as far as they followed the guidance of Scripture is validity to be ascribed to them, and, therefore, he concludes that the true norm and test of a reformation is to be sought in the Word of God alone.

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[28] "Werke," l. 514-516.

[29] *Ibid.*, l. 520.

[30] *Ibid.*, l. 522-524.

[31] *Ibid.*, l. 524-526.

In the second part he examines at length the proceedings of the first four General Councils in order to prove his contention that, in matters of faith, they took the Scripture as their sole standard.[32] In asserting the doctrine of the Trinity (the equal divinity of Father, Son, and Spirit) against Arius and Macedonius, and that of the two natures, divine and human, in one person in Christ against Nestorius and Eutyches, these Councils were merely declaring the ancient faith as reflected in the New Testament, which the Church had held from the time of the Apostles. They formulated no new articles of faith, but only vindicated the teaching of Scripture. Whilst he reviews at length these doctrinal controversies with considerable knowledge and great dialectic ability, it cannot be said that he shows adequate critical insight into the problem whether these Councils did not introduce something new into the faith. Though he is aware of the problem, he does not sufficiently ponder, in the light of history, whether the metaphysical definition of the Trinity, for instance, which these Greek Fathers developed, exactly represents the teaching of the New Testament. Sharing the orthodox view of the consubstantiality and co-divinity of the Son and the Spirit with the Father, and of the two natures in one person in Christ, he accepts these doctrines, as thus technically defined, as a *sine qua non* of Christian faith. He indiscriminatingly holds, too, that these dogmas are explicitly taught in the Synoptic Gospels and even the prophets, as well as in the Fourth Gospel.[33] If he had had an adequate critical knowledge of the development of theological speculation under the influence of Greek philosophy, he would hardly have been so insistent in identifying the metaphysical reasonings of these Greek Fathers with the primitive faith. He is, in this respect, in fact, too apt to make his own faith the arbiter of history, instead of making history the arbiter of faith, in the case of dogmas which rest on an historical foundation. At the same time, he has an inkling of the difficulty

[32] "Werke," l. 547 f.

[33] *Ibid.*, l. 605.

of making use of non-scriptural terms to define New Testament beliefs. He recognises and deplores the contentiousness of the orthodox members of these Councils as well as of those whom they condemned as heretics, and is strongly repelled by their controversial methods.[34] He finds the record of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon unedifying and depressing reading. "Whoever wishes may read farther the histories of this Council (Chalcedon). I have read them in no agreeable mood. Such quarrelling, confusion, and disorder are displayed in them that I am fain to believe the saying of Gregory Nazienzen, 'If I would speak the truth, I would say, Flee all Councils of bishops, since I have seen a happy end of none of them, and rather an increase than a suppression of evils, as the result of them.'"[35] He feels, too, that we must have something more certain to rest our faith on than the mere dicta of such Councils, and this he finds in Scripture alone, though he nevertheless maintains that what the orthodox party vindicated against their opponents was in accordance with Scripture teaching. But while accepting their decrees as scriptural, he characteristically denies this attribute to the Councils held under papal auspices. The greater number of the papal Councils have departed from the fundamental principle on which the first four based their contentions, and this because the Pope has put himself in the place of Christ, and has assumed an authority superior to the Scriptures, though his claim finds no support in the history of these ancient Councils.[36] The eastern bishops did not admit his pretensions, and the Bishop of Constantinople erelong appears as his compeer in the East.

From this review he concludes, in accordance with his fundamental principle of the sole authority of Scripture as the norm of faith, that a Council cannot decree new articles of faith. Its function is to declare the ancient faith in accordance with Scripture teaching, and resist and condemn all attempts to subvert it, as these Councils did, and were bound to do. A council has, further, no power to declare new good works. Good works are exhaustively enjoined in

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[34] "Werke," l. 589.

[35] *Ibid.*, l. 604.

[36] *Ibid.*, l. 606.

Scripture, and are summed up in the supreme injunction to love, which is the fulfilling of all the commandments. It has only power, and is indeed bound, to resist and condemn evil works, including not only those which are manifestly such, like murder, adultery, etc., but those which are the fruit of a false zeal for holiness (monasticism) and are a perversion of true Christian faith and life. Nor has a Council power to impose new ceremonies, such as fasts and festival days, etc. Nay, it is bound to condemn them as a new species of idolatry. Christ introduced few ceremonies, and such things ought to be left free and not made a matter of conscience. Nor has it a right to infringe on secular government. On the contrary, it is bound to abolish all decrees of this kind, which are an outcome of the clerical striving for domination. Ecclesiastical regulation should concern itself merely with what is necessary for the orderly maintenance of worship. But, complain his opponents, is not this to attribute to Councils less power than that of a pastor over his flock, or a schoolmaster over his pupils? Is, then, retorts Luther, the office of a pastor or a schoolmaster so inferior that it is not to be compared to that of a Council? Did not Augustine, the pastor of a small town like Hippo, render greater service to the Church than all the Councils together? A Council is the servant of the Church, whose office is to judge, when circumstances require, in accordance with the law of the Church, which is the Holy Scripture.[37] Its function is only intermittent, whereas that of the pastor and schoolmaster is permanent and essentially necessary for the very existence of the Church.[38] Such a Council is now needed to free the Church from the burdens and evils which the Papacy has imposed on it, and to restore the Gospel of God's grace without reservation. It is vain to grant the necessity of a reformation and refuse to draw the right conclusion from it. It is, for instance, an impossible dialectic to admit that the grace of Christ alone saves, and nevertheless retain the belief in satisfaction by the sinner. The Pope shall, therefore, in a Reform Council not only give up his tyranny based on mere human ordinance; he shall declare in favour of the evangelical teaching that good works are of no avail for salvation. " He shall condemn and burn all his bulls, decretals, proclamation of indulgences, purgatory, monkery, saint worship, pilgrimages, along with all his innumerable lies and idolatry, as sheer contradictions of the Gospel of God's saving grace in Christ. He shall, too, give up what he has by these devices filched, robbed, stolen, plundered, or obtained, especially his pretended primacy, which, he boasts, is so necessary that no one can be saved who is not subject to him. For the Pope's hat has not died for my sins. Nor is he Christ ; yea, all Christians under his rule have attained salvation without his hat."[39] To this end, if he will not agree to call such a Council, the emperor and kings shall compel him, and the Council so convened shall not consist of the bishops and higher clergy as heretofore, who would simply waste years in personal contention and junketings, and finish up by burning a couple of heretics, with such expenditure of money as would suffice to maintain a whole army against the Turks. " On the contrary, it must consist of men from all lands thoroughly grounded in Holy Writ, who earnestly have at heart the honour of God, the Christian faith, the interest of the Church, the salvation of the soul, and the peace of the world. It should, moreover, include a number of intelligent and reliable laymen, who have also a stake in it."[40] If the convention of such an assembly is impossible (and he himself has little faith in its realisation), then have done with all this palaver about a General Council, and let the Emperor call a German Council, whose example other nations would doubtless follow.[41] Meanwhile he is content to entrust this great cause to God, and to place his confidence in the evangelical instruction of the people in church and school.

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[37] "Werke," l. 615-616.

[38] *Ibid.*, l. 617.

In Part III. he develops afresh his conception of the Church. As in the Apostles' Creed, the holy Christian Church is the fellowship of the saints, " the mass or assembly of such persons as are Christian and holy." Pope, cardinals, bishops, do not constitute the Church, as the Romanists would have us believe, and the term " Church " (Kirche) is thus liable to be misunderstood. In the Greek world it meant the assembled people. In its general Christian sense it expresses the whole Christian people who believe in Christ and are sanctified by the Holy Spirit—in short, God's people. If we had been content to abide by the Creed, all the miserable misunderstanding which has gathered round this word "Church," in the papal, hierarchical, monkish sense, would have been avoided, and the Church would have stood clearly forth as the Christian holy people on earth, in whom Christ lives, works, rules, through His redeeming grace, and the Holy Spirit operates through His sanctifying, renewing power.[42] This is what constitutes the holy Catholic Church—a very different thing from the holy Roman Church.[43] In it the process of redemption and sanctification is at work, by which the Holy Spirit operates in us the fulfilment of both tables of the Law and the repression of sin. The marks of the Church [44] are the effective preaching of the Word of God; the ministration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Supper, in accordance with the Word; the exercise of the power of the keys or discipline by the pastor of each congregation; the regular ministry for the performance of the aforesaid functions; public worship in the form of prayer, praise, thanksgiving in an intelligible language; the Cross as the emblem of suffering and trial in the conflict with the devil, the world, and the flesh. This is the true Catholic Church or people of God, whom the Holy Spirit sanctifies by these means, and causes, like the seed sown in good ground, to bear fruit a hundredfold. From this people, not from the higher orders of the hierarchy, the members of a Council in which the Holy Spirit shall rule, ought to be selected.[45] Beside this holy Church which God builds, the devil has, however, erected his chapel, which is larger than the Church of God, and has given it the false semblance of God's work. For the devil is ever wont to play the ape of God, and, through the Pope and the bishops, makes use of these marks of the holy Catholic Church in establishing his counterfeit Church with its holy water, salt, herbs, candles, bells, images, pallia, altars, tonsure, and other fooleries, by which he seduces and deceives his votaries. Luther's realistic belief in the devil and his tricks, which he shares to the full with the popular superstition of his time, thus leads him to see in the papal Church the diabolic counterfeit of the true Catholic Church. Other usages, such as the holy days, hours of worship, vestments, candles, bells, altars, baptismal fonts, etc., whilst useful, are of the nature of accidentals, and do not sanctify the soul. One can preach in the street as effectively as in the church, dispense the sacraments with or without an altar, though it may be expedient to observe such merely external devices in the interest of order, and they are not to be wilfully spurned.[46] " In this matter we should act in the interest of peace and order, and nevertheless maintain freedom to change the order as circumstances demand." [47] On the other hand, the tyranny, with its multitude of regulations, by which the Pope and these asses, the Canonists, have enslaved the Church and displaced the Scripture, should be thrown into the fire or relegated to the shelves of libraries as relics of the papal domination. Ecclesiastical ceremonial is to be used with moderation in order that it may not become a burden, and thus stifle the religious life.[48] Far more important to maintain schools for the instruction and discipline of the young, and for the training of preachers and pastors and the service of the State. Properly organised schools are far more effective adjuncts of the Church than all the Councils. Next in importance are the Christian household and the civic authority. Church, school, the family, and the State—this is the true hierarchy ordained by God for the maintenance of the Christian life against the devil, and the false and oppressive régime of the Pope.[49]

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[39] " Werke," l. 621. [40] *Ibid.*, l. 622. [41] *Ibid.*, l. 623.

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[42] "Werke," l. 624-625.

[43] *Ibid.*, l. 625-626.

[44] *Ibid.*, l. 628 f.

[45] *Ibid.*, l. 644.

He fired what we may call his parting shot at the Papacy in 1545, the year before his death. It was provoked by the angry protests and threats of Paul III.[50] against the imperial concessions to the Protestants at the Diet of Spires in 1544, at the expense of the papal authority. On reading the papal missive to the Emperor, he vowed to paint the Pope in his true colours, if health and time permitted. His resolution was strengthened by the request of the Elector for a counter-blast,[51] and a hint to the same effect conveyed to him indirectly from the imperial chancery itself.[52] He was especially riled by the Pope's resolution to exclude the heretics from participation in the Council which he had summoned to Trent, and gave vent to his anger in his most furious style in the philippic "Against the Papacy at Rome Founded by the Devil." [53] Unfortunately, he allowed his wrath to explode in outbursts of vulgarity as well as violence. In grossness and fury of language it is among the worst of Luther's controversial effusions. He works himself into a frenzy at times, and calls on the Emperor and kings to seize the Pope and his knavish brood of cardinals and satellites, deprive them of all their ill-gotten booty and riches, string them up on a gallows, or drown them in the sea at Ostia, or skin them alive, or burn them. In other passages he descends to the level of the coarse peasant on the principle that "he must make use of gross examples for gross asses like the Pope and the cardinals." [54] For him the Papacy is such an abomination that he cannot use gross enough expressions to discredit "the wretched, accursed, and horrible monster at Rome." [55] He has, therefore, no need to apologise for this coarseness, which he regards as amply justified by the object of it. To the modern reader it shows a deplorable lack of refinement and literary taste, which even the choleric temperament and the declining health of the writer cannot excuse, though it was doubtless less offensive to his age than to ours. Evidently his university education and monastic training had not refined the boor in him when it came to a violent altercation in the vulgar tongue, and it booted to stir up the common man by a party philippic against the other side. In addition, he is evidently subject to fits of irascibility, which were aggravated by the state of his health,[56] and is unable to realise that, in giving such frenzied and gross vent to them, he is only doing more injury to his own reputation and his cause than to his enemies. This was the impression produced, even among some of his admirers, by these obnoxious passages.

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[46] " Werke," l. 649.

[47] *Ibid.*, l. 650.

[48] *Ibid.*, l. 650-651.

[49] *Ibid.*, l. 651-653.

[50] On the papal Brief see Druffel, " Kaiser Karl V. und die römische Kurie," i. 214 f.; Cardauns, " Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland," vii. (1912); Joachim Müller, " Die Politik Kaiser Karls V.," " Z.K.G." (1925), 235-236 and 399 f.

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[51] Enders-Kawerau, xvi. 183-184; *cf.* 163-164, 172. Non tamen feriabor quin illam bullam suis pingam coloribus, si valetudo et otium permisserit.

[52] Grisar, "Luther," v. 382.

[53] Wider das Bapstum zu Rom vom Teufel gestiftet, March 1545, "Werke," 26, 109 f. (Erlangen ed.); liv. 206 f.

[54] *Ibid.*, 26, 200.

[55] *Ibid.*, 26, 179.

On the other hand, these undoubted blemishes should not blind us to the substantial force of the work as a whole. If his bodily powers were failing, his mind was as alert and vigorous as of yore. The work, indeed, shows extraordinary argumentative power and a wonderful ability to marshal historic evidence in support of his contentions. He fails, indeed, to argue his case from history in anything like an objective spirit. Theological bias is allowed full play in dealing with matters in which the historic sense, not theological predilection, is the only true guide to the truth. Historic sense he does not possess, since he starts with the assumption that the Papacy is the work of the devil, and does not calmly concern himself with the question whether the Papacy did not arise out of the historic conditions of the time, and not merely from the personal ambition of the popes, inspired by the devil for the purpose of disfiguring and destroying Christianity. His theory is that from the seventh century onwards they were so inspired, and that they accordingly succeeded, by the use of every diabolic art, in inflicting on the Church and the world the most terrible and tyrannous imposture ever conceived by the depraved and perverted wit of man. In short, the Papacy is the kingdom of the devil, the negation of the kingdom of God, the unalloyed expression of a false Christianity, which has served to establish the devil's reign, instead of that of Christ, over the souls and bodies of men. Its spirit and motive are Antichristian and diabolic from beginning to end. This extreme theory conditions his method of reading history, which is that of the dogmatic controversialist, not of the judicial historian, and inevitably leads to inadequate and biased historic judgments.

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[56] "Werke," 26, 136, denn mein Kopf ist schwach. He adds that his strength is failing him.

At the same time, apart from this additional blemish, the irascible dogmatist does present a strong indictment of the Papacy in his own doctrinaire, one-sided fashion. Style and method notwithstanding, and judged even from the historical point of view, it did, and does, make a powerful impression as an exposition of the errors and evils inherent in the system it castigates. King Ferdinand might be biased for political reasons against the Pope in favour of his brother, the Emperor. But even so strict a Roman Catholic in the doctrinal sense was fain to own that, " if these objectionable passages were excised, Luther had not written badly." [57] Protestant as well as Roman Catholic writers have hardly done justice to its argumentative strength, and one must read it right through, not merely skim it, in order to appraise it at its proper value. Grisar, for instance, contents himself with picking out the obnoxious passages as a sample of his outrageous mentality in his declining days, without finding it necessary to indicate or face its damaging arraignment of papal error and misrule.[58]

In a lengthy introduction he asserts anew the old conciliar contention that a General Council is superior to the Pope, in reference to the attempt of the Emperor to convene in Germany a free Christian Council for the settlement of the religious question. Such a Council is poison and death to the Papacy, seeing that on two occasions in Germany—at Constance and Basle—it had deposed the Pope for very substantial reasons, and attempted to reform the Church in virtue of its inherent power. For the Pope and his fellow-knaves at Rome, a free Council means freedom from its control and the exclusion of those whom they deem heretics, but who have vindicated Christianity from the Roman perversion of it. They claim for their corrupt and degraded system a monopoly of Christianity, and on this assumption the Apostle Paul—nay, God Himself—would have no chance of admission. In order to frustrate the Emperor's efforts to assemble a really free and Christian Council for the settlement of the religious question in Germany, they adduce the pretext that, in the state of war existing between France and Germany, it would not be safe to hold it within the empire. They adduce, further, the pretext that it belongs to the papal prerogative alone to convene a Council. What, then, saith history? Did not the emperors convene the ancient General Councils, and is not the Emperor Charles amply justified in following the example of Constantine and other ancient emperors in seeking, by this expedient, to further the religious peace and welfare of the empire? "The Pope would rather that the whole of Germany were drenched in its own blood than that peace should be established within it, and that the whole world should go down with him to hell-fire than that a single soul should be brought to the true evangelical faith."[59] There was at least so much truth in this sweeping generalisation that Pope Paul III., for political and personal reasons, had done his best to thwart the Emperor's pacific policy. There was no little force, too, in his appeal to the history of the reforming Councils of the fifteenth century to justify his disbelief in an effective reformation under papal auspices. When at Rome long ago he had heard the proverb, "If there is a hell, Rome is built on the top of it."[60] As well, therefore, seek to reform hell as to reform Rome. An extreme conclusion, certainly, in view of the serious effort that was to be made at Trent to deal with the reform question by the more serious advocates of reform within the Church. At the same time, Trent was to prove that there really was no prospect of even such an assembly achieving a reformation in the old conciliar sense, let alone a reformation in the evangelical, Lutheran sense. For Luther, in fact, reform now means the overthrow, root and branch, of the Roman Antichrist and all his works, and the reduction of his power and status to those of Bishop of Rome—to the position, that is, which, in his view, he held in the ancient Church before the seventh century, when the usurper Phocas, the murderer of the Emperor Maurice, first recognised him as "head of all the Churches," and the popes began their nefarious striving to dominate the Church in the service of their Antichristian ambition and tyranny. To this end he proceeds to ask and answer three questions: Is it true that the Pope is the head of Christendom and supreme over Councils, Emperor, and the whole world? Is it true that he can be judged by no one? Is it true that he conveyed the imperial power from the Greeks to the Germans? [61]

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[57] " Werke," 26, 109.

[58] " Luther," v. 383-385.

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[59] "Werke," 26, 132.

[60] *Ibid.*, 26, 126.

In dealing with the first question, which takes up the greater part of the work, he concentrates on the passages, Matt. xvi. 15-19, xviii. 15-20; John xx. 21-23, xxi. 15-16, to which the popes appeal in justification of their claims. He thus renews the old debate with Eck at Leipzig, but with a freedom, a boldness, a widened knowledge which reveals, in striking fashion, how far he had travelled on the road away from Rome since those days of tentative reform. On the brink of the grave, after nearly thirty years of ceaseless conflict and strain, the Pope has become for him the sworn enemy of Christ and Christ's Church, and he has become the sworn enemy of the Pope as the devil in person. That these passages have nothing to do with the Papacy, he seeks to prove by a lengthy exegetical and historical argumentation, which displays great force and acuteness. He certainly succeeds in showing that, viewed in their historical setting, they represent a condition of things very different from what the later popes, by a false and forced interpretation, read into them, in order to find a Scripture sanction for their presumptuous claim to domination over the Church and the State. To this false exegesis he applies the warning in Matt. xxiv. against false Christs, who would lead astray, if possible, the elect, and against false prophets who come in sheep's clothing (Matt. vii. 15). This is the worst crime of the popes that they claim "to have power to interpret the Scriptures in accordance with their own mad sense," and not in accordance with what Christ plainly meant, and have put in the place of Scripture their devilish and knavish decrees.[62] The Church, as instituted by Christ and existing in the early centuries, is absolutely unrecognisable in the later Roman Sodom. The popes have juggled the world into believing in their usurped power in the teeth of the plain testimony alike of Scripture and early Church history, which lend no countenance whatever to their diabolic pretensions and perversions. The Papacy is a pure human imagination and invention, the most complete imposture and idolatry ever foisted by the devil on a credulous world, which God has permitted in His wrath as a judgment on its sins. It has been reserved to the present time to unearth this wicked imposture in the light of the appeal to Scripture, when even the common man has learned to distinguish between divine truth and such an unspeakable distortion of it.[63] The world has at last learned that the rock on which the Church was founded, and has been built up, is Christ Himself, and the faith which Peter, as the spokesman for the other disciples, confessed, as he seeks to show by a minute examination of the passage in Matt. xvi.[64] He fortifies this interpretation by quoting from Peter himself (1 Pet. ii. 4-7) and Paul (Eph. iv. 15-16). Moreover, the keys were given not exclusively to Peter, as Matt. xviii. 18-20 and John xx. 21-23 make clear beyond a doubt. In the former passage Christ entrusts the power of loosing and binding to all the disciples, and promises to be effectively present for the forgiveness of sins wherever even two or three are gathered together. "God will thus not be limited in His working by numbers, or the greatness, rank, or power of any individual. He will only be among those who love and keep His Word, even if they are but stable boys. What cares He for high, great, and mighty lords, who alone is the greatest, highest, and mightiest!"[65] Similarly, in the latter passage, He does not breathe the Holy Spirit on Peter alone, but on all His disciples. Nor does He send Peter only, but all the disciples, to preach and declare the forgiveness of sins. These Roman asses, who prate of the rights and powers of Peter alone, would thus unchurch Christ Himself as a heretic.[66] Moreover, the keys were not given for the purpose of exercising an absolute, arbitrary domination over the Church, but expressly for the benefit of sinners.

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[61] "Werke," 26, 136 f.

[62] *Ibid.*, 26, 142.

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[63] "Werke," 26, 149-151.

[64] *Ibid.*, 26, 156 f.

[65] *Ibid.*, 26, 166.

[66] *Ibid.*, 26, 167-169.

It is a spiritual office, a *beneficium*, not a lordship, or a *dominium*, that is conferred. It does not constitute the disciples, far less the Pope and the bishops of the distant future, the lords and superiors of the Church.[67]

The ridiculous assumption that the Pope, as St Peter's successor, is entitled to jurisdiction over the whole Church is, farther, utterly incompatible with the independent activity and the equal apostolic status of all the other Apostles as the founders of Churches. The Roman Church was certainly not founded by Peter, but probably, as he shrewdly supposes, by some unknown Jewish Christian evangelist, who had been converted during a visit to Jerusalem in the early days of the apostolic preaching, and on his return had spread the faith among his fellow-Jews. How, then, can the popes be the successors of one who was not the founder of the Roman Church, though it may be true that he was ultimately martyred there?[68] Great Churches like Antioch and Alexandria were similarly not founded by Apostles, and both of them were for long more important centres of Christian teaching than that of Rome. On the other hand, it is certain that Peter did found a number of Churches, and these had an ample right to dispute the false and arrogant claim of the Roman bishop, and have, in fact, ever disowned it.[69] All this prating of these Roman liars and blockheads about apostolic foundations rests on an utterly false and fleshly conception of the spiritual office, and has eventuated in the imposition of the devilish tyranny of the Pope and the Antichristian papal system on the Church. God does not measure His spiritual benefits by such "fleshly" external considerations. He does not, as the Pope falsely assumes, confine the operation of His Spirit to Rome. The Holy Ghost and His gifts are not hereditary; they come like the wind, which blows where it listeth. Hippo and Wittenberg might be small and insignificant communities, but Hippo produced Augustine, and Wittenberg may claim to have given to the Church God-inspired teachers.[70] He claims, in fact, that he and his followers, in nearly every land, are more learned in the Scriptures than the Pope and all his asses.[71]

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[67] "Werke," 26, 164-165.

[68] *Ibid.*, 26, 172.

[69] *Ibid.*, 26, 169 f.

[70] *Ibid.*, 26, 175.

In further disproof of the papal claim to be founded on the rock, he gives a terrible picture of the unchristian fabric which the Pope has built on this false foundation. On it he has raised the hideous monument of his own tyranny, ambition, and self-exaltation, which has no claim whatever to be God's kingdom, but is in very deed the kingdom of the devil. This terrible picture is, of course, overcoloured by his theological bias and his inadequate historic sense. The language is at times outrageous, and the raving tone of the worst pages detracts from the value of what is, otherwise, a powerful indictment on historic as well as moral and theological grounds. At the same time, it must be remembered that the unreformed Papacy, with which Luther is dealing, is the Papacy as represented by a too long series of unworthy popes, whose lives and régime were a crying scandal and outrage on the Christian profession. Apart from the violence of his language, his demonstration that this system could not possibly have been in the mind of Christ when He uttered the words, in answer to Peter's question, ascribed to Him by Matthew's Gospel, is unanswerable. Even if He did utter these words—and the authenticity of the text, in view of the existence of a Petrine party in the early Church, is far from assured—He was certainly not thinking of the Papacy, which was far beyond the horizon of the time, far less of the secularised, oppressive, and degenerate system of the later Middle Age, which rightly excited Luther's scathing indignation. Moreover, allowance must be made for the fact that Luther's appeal for reform on practical and theological grounds had met with antagonism and condemnation at the hands of the popes, and that he had been embittered and his scepticism confirmed by thirty years of incessant strain and persecution. His conviction that the Papacy would never surrender its claims and its pernicious absolutism, in deference to the teaching of Scripture and history, was substantially founded, though he was wrong in his assumption that in no circumstances would it effectively reform itself or the Church. "If the Pope is to carry out a real reformation, he must burn all the papal decretals and therewith himself and all his cardinals." [72] His own work had, in fact, compelled it at last to take up the task of at least a practical reformation, which the Council of Trent was about to legislate. Assuredly this terrible indictment, in spite of its wild passages, must have brought home to even his most optimistic antagonists the clamant necessity of such a reformation. As a sample of its challenging directness and downrightness, take the paragraph in which he sums up what he claims to have proved in this long argumentation. "This tractate has grown too large under my hands. As the proverb has it, 'Age is forgetful and garrulous,' and thus, perhaps, it has happened to me. Although the devilish horrors of the Papacy are in themselves an unspeakable wilderness, I nevertheless hope that for him who will allow himself to be convinced (for my part I am certain), I have developed the answer to the first question—Whether it is true that the Pope is the head of Christendom and superior to all other powers?—so clearly and forcibly that no good Christian conscience can be in doubt that the Pope is not, and cannot be, the head of the Christian Church, nor the vicar of God or Christ. On the contrary, he has been shown to be the head of the accursed Church of the worst villains on earth, a vicar of the devil, an enemy of God, an antagonist of Christ, a teacher of lies, blasphemy, and idolatry, an arch-thief and robber of churches and the keys, of the property of churches and secular rulers, a murderer of kings, and a stirrer-up of bloodshed, the worst keeper of prostitutes, the promoter of incontinence, even that which cannot be mentioned, an Antichrist, a man of sin, and child of destruction, a thorough werewolf. He who will not believe this, let him go on with his god, the Pope. I, as a called teacher and preacher of Christ's Church, under obligation to speak the truth, have done my part. He who will be lost, let him be lost. His blood be on his own head." [73]

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[71] "Werke," 26, 194; *cf.* 212.

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[72] "Werke," 26, 192.

[73] *Ibid.*, 26, 208-209.

II. In Defence of the Reformation

Luther's crusade against the Papacy included a running fight with the Pope's champions, both lay and clerical. Among the special objects of these side attacks were Duke George of Saxony, the Archbishop of Maintz, and Duke Henry of Brunswick. With the first two he had been at open feud almost from the outset of his career as reformer. It must be said that Duke George, a staunch, though by no means uncritical, Romanist, by his unremitting efforts to deprive him of the protection of his cousins, the Electors Frederick and John, and to counter the Lutheran movement in the Diet and the Imperial Council of Regency, had done much to merit his uncompromising antipathy. Not content with this diplomatic activity, he had, in 1531, joined in the press warfare against him with a counterblast to his "Warning to His Dear Germans,"[1] in which he accused him of preaching rebellion against constituted authority. Luther retorted with a violent counter-attack, justifying his attitude on the question of the right of resistance to tyranny, and disclaiming the imputation of seeking to undermine the lawful allegiance of the subject. To teach resistance to tyranny is not to overthrow, but to confirm obedience to lawful authority. These Romanist tyrants who would fain deluge Germany in blood in the interest of the Roman Antichrist are past praying for. In their recourse to persecuting edicts, they have declared war on God and have spurned every attempt to reach a settlement by negotiation on the basis of respect for conscientious conviction. For such bloodhounds, who have for so many years rejected his humble overtures, he can no longer pray. They shall never again have a single good word from him, and he will continue to denounce and damn them till the grave closes over him. "When I pray I can only curse them. Shall I say 'Hallowed be Thy name,' I must add, Cursed, damned, dishonoured be the name of the papists and all who blaspheme Thy name.

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[1] "Wider des Luther's Warnung an die Deutschen," printed in "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 416 f.

Shall I say, 'Thy kingdom come,' I must also say, Cursed, damned, destroyed be the Papacy, along with all kingdoms on earth which are contrary to Thy kingdom. Shall I say, 'Thy will be done,' I must at the same time say, Cursed, damned, disgraced, and nullified be all the thoughts and designs of the papists and all who strive against Thy will. Verily, so I pray every day with lips and heart without ceasing, and with me all who believe in Christ. And I am convinced that this prayer will be answered, in view of God's miraculous working, who has brought to naught this terrible Diet of Augsburg and the unmeasured threats and fury of the papists, and will still utterly frustrate them. Nevertheless, I retain a good, friendly, peaceful, and Christian heart towards all men."[2] He has certainly learned to become a good hater. Perhaps this quality was essential to the maintenance of his cause. Anger, he tells us, was a tonic to his mind and body, a very gift of God when rightly directed. It certainly imparted a tremendous verve to his controversial writings, and fetched a multitude of readers whom a merely academic style would have bored or left unmoved. In palliation of this particular explosion of it, it should be remembered that he was face to face with what he believed, not without considerable ground, to be a set attempt to crush the Lutheran party by the sword. None the less, this furious interpolation of the Lord's Prayer goes beyond the limit in its aberration from the spirit of its author, who enjoined his followers to bless and curse not. It is, moreover, the more inexcusable in view of the fact that he himself was by this time advocating the use of the sword against the Anabaptists and other sectaries.

His antipathy was intensified by the persecution of his followers in the duchy, and by the fact that Cochlaeus took up the cudgels on behalf of the Duke. It found renewed, though more restrained, expression in "A Short Answer to Duke George's Latest Book,"[3] which Cochlaeus had written at the Duke's expense. It contained an interesting review of his former life and experience as a monk, in reply to what Cochlaeus termed his apostasy. For the rest he contented himself with satirising both the Duke and his champion, whose name he parodies into Dr Gowk (Gauch), "which is the proper term to express his distinctive character."

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[2] "Werke," xxx., Pt. III., 470.

[3] *Ibid.*, xxxiii., 141 f. (1533).

Next to Duke George, the Archbishop of Maintz had become the object of his special aversion since, in 1533, he had taken a leading part in fomenting a counter-league to that of Schmalkald, and had striven to suppress the Reformation in his residential city of Halle by banishing the evangelical members of the Town Council in the following year. Rightly or wrongly, Luther also held him responsible for the murder of its Lutheran pastor, Winkler, in 1527. He had, moreover, provoked the ill-will of his subjects of the dioceses of Magdeburg and Halberstadt by the rapacious taxes which he extorted in order to meet the expense of a luxurious court and carry out a scheme for the rebuilding of Halle. He employed as his agent in raising and disbursing these taxes an enterprising merchant burgess, Hans Schönitz, who had risen high in his favour and for whom he had secured a patent of nobility in reward of his services. When in 1534 the provincial Estates demanded an account of the spending of this money, the archbishop suddenly had Von Schönitz arrested, tortured, and hanged at Giebichstein on a charge of malpractice (June 1535). Under torture the wretched agent confessed his guilt, but on the scaffold revoked his confession and solemnly averred his innocence. His brother Anton, who fled to Saxony, appealed to Luther to secure him the protection of the Elector. Luther not only did so, but wrote a couple of angry letters to the archbishop, denouncing his iniquitous régime and threatening to expose it through the press.[4] "I will get up a carnival play that shall turn out to be a right jolly one, with God's help. Let your electoral grace's feet itch for the dance, for which I will be the piper."

In justification of his drastic action in executing Schönitz, the archbishop adduced his misappropriation of large sums for his own enrichment, and he does appear to have used his position to further his own interest. However this may be, Luther had evidently convinced himself, from his examination of the documents which Anton Schönitz had brought from Halle, that the archbishop had made him a scapegoat for his own misuse of the money extorted from his subjects, and had had his agent put out of the way in order to frustrate the scandal of an exposure. He held, moreover, that he had been guilty of a great miscarriage of justice in torturing and hanging his agent in this shady business, inasmuch as he himself was a party in the case and had no right to take upon himself the part of judge and executioner. The only just course was, he maintained, to refer the case to the Imperial Court of Justice. In spite of the efforts of Duke Albrecht of Prussia and other members of the Brandenburg family on behalf of their kinsman, he ultimately carried out his threat in the beginning of 1539 by launching from the press a flaming indictment, "Against the Bishop of Magdeburg."[5]

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[4] "Werke," 55, 98 f. and 125 f. (Erlangen ed.).

His resolution to strike out had been steeled by the appearance in the spring of 1538 of a collection of epigrams written by a Wittenberg student, Lemnius, reflecting, as Luther thought, on the character of certain of the citizens and extolling the virtues of the cardinal-archbishop as an ecclesiastical prince and the Mæcenas of humanist culture. Luther not only had the witty author, who disclaimed the libellous purpose attributed to him, expelled from the University; he read a declaration after sermon in the parish church on the 16th June 1538, in which he denounced both Lemnius as a gutter poet and the archbishop, to whom he applied a very coarse epithet, as a devil, whom the servile poet had sought to transform into a saint.[6] He would certainly have consulted his dignity had he spared himself and his hearers this furious outburst of personal animus. This animus is patent enough in the philippic which he hurled from the press against the archbishop six months later. At the same time, assuming that the archbishop had actually hanged the instrument of his rapacity to save his own neck, as Luther believed on the evidence before him, the philippic does credit to his sense of justice and his hatred of arbitrary power used for unworthy ends. He will

[5] "Werke," l. 395 f.

[6] *Ibid.*, l. 350-351.

not, he declares, be debarred from pillorying those in high places by considerations of princely rank or family honour. "God has created those of humble estate as well as the great. For princes have not been ordained by God to torment widows and orphans, and poor, miserable people, but to protect, save, help them. Similarly, their counsellors and jurists. What need have we of princes, counsellors, and jurists if we allow the devil to do what he pleases?"[7] In the persons of the cardinal-archbishop and his mercenary jurists, he lashes the maladministration of justice and confronts it with the justice of God. Tried by this standard, or even by the law of the empire, the cardinal is a tyrant and a murderer. The use of torture to extort confessions of this kind, and for such a base purpose, is a device of the devil, and tends, as often as not, to implicate the innocent and defeat the ends of justice.[8] He is not concerned to defend Schönitz for his complicity with the cardinal's evil deeds. But if he deserved death at the hands of God for this complicity, he would like to know where one would find a gallows high enough to hang the cardinal on, for his tyranny and his dissolute life. On the evidence on which he professes to base his case against him, but which his animus leads him to interpret in the worst light, he is a tyrant and a murderer, a knave, and a debauchee. With all these virtues of his he would make a first-rate Pope.[9] At all events, from the legal point of view, he makes out a strong plea that, in acting both as party and judge, and in sending his victim to the gallows without an impartial trial, he was guilty of judicial murder by the law of the empire as well as the law of the land.

Another effusion of the same sort is the philippic, "Against Hans Worst (Sausage)" (1541),[10] as he dubbed Duke Henry of Brunswick. Here, too, he indulges without stint in personal abuse in arguing his case. In part, however, the contents are better than the style, and the philippic is interesting as an apology for the Reformation against its detractors, of whom Duke Henry was one of the most outrageous in his pamphlet warfare against his enemies, the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse. The calumnies of such liars is a testimony to the truth of his cause. He refutes the charge that the Reformed Church has fallen away from the true Church, and denies that the papal Church can claim such a designation. The Reformed Church is a member of the old true Church, inasmuch as it possesses the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the power of the keys, the Word and preaching, without any addition of man, the ancient faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed. The Romanists, in defaming the Reformed Church as heretical, thus defame Christ Himself. In addition, it is at one with the ancient Church in inculcating obedience to the civil authority as a divine ordinance; in suffering persecution and martyrdom without retaliation, and praying for enemies; in the poverty of its ministers, whom peasant and burgher allow to starve, and the nobility deprive of the old ecclesiastical endowments. On the other hand, the papal Church by its false teaching and usages has departed from the ancient faith and practice, as he shows by a review of the enormities and abuses in both respects, which the devil has inspired, and which have utterly deformed the Church of the Apostles and the early Fathers. Who, he demands, has commanded you to institute such things? Where is it written? Which is the new and apostate Church, yours or ours? God be praised that He has delivered us from this den of prostitution, this Babylon into which the Pope has transformed the old apostolic Church, and which every Christian should flee as from hell itself.

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[7] "Werke," l. 398. [8] *Ibid.*, l. 411 f. [9] *Ibid.*, l. 418.

[10] *Ibid.*, li. 469 f. Duke Henry had averred that Luther had dubbed the Elector John Frederick "Hans Worst." This Luther denied, and applied the designation to the Duke himself in the title of his pamphlet.

He recognises, indeed, that the papal Church has derived from the ancient Church the sacraments, the keys, the Gospel, and that the Reformed Church in turn has derived these from it.[11] But it has not remained content with these blessings. It has committed the grossest spiritual prostitution, which he pictures in vivid but gross colours, comparing it to a young girl who has plighted her troth to her bridegroom, but, on reaching the years of puberty, gives

[11] "Werke," li 501.

herself over to wholesale whoredom. Thus Hans Worst and the papists understand what God and the true Church are, much less than a cow or a sow. "A high, deep, concealed reality is the Church. No one can see or know it except by faith in the sacraments and the Word. Human teaching, ceremonies, shaven crowns, long gowns, bishops' mitres, and the whole papal paraphernalia lead only far away from it to hell. For to it belong infants, men, women, peasants, burghers, who have neither shaven crowns nor bishops' mitres, nor Mass vestments."[12]

But is it not possible to come to a compromise on the basis of mutual concessions? Impossible, retorts Luther.[13] You cannot combine human teaching and God's Word. God Himself cannot change His Word. It is not a reed that the wind bends hither and thither at man's behest. The antithesis between them is absolute. The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth, as Paul teaches (1 Tim. iii. 15), and what wavers or is doubtful cannot be the truth. How can that be the Church of God that adds at will this or that to the truth of God? The Word alone being the only sure and certain standard, there can be no compromise with the human additions in doctrine and usage which the papal Church has made to it. Luther has thus emphatically left the way of compromise, which he was at first disposed to follow in his controversy with Carlstadt and others. It is of no avail to say that it can do no harm to accept such additions along with the Word. This is to expose the Church to error, and only as the Church is founded on the Word can it claim to be the pillar of the truth and cannot err. It is, indeed, not without sin, and so far it is liable to err. But the Word itself is the absolute truth, and in so far as its preachers take their stand on it alone, they can only speak the truth. "Therefore nothing must be promoted in the Church but the certain, pure, and eternal Word of God. Where this is lacking there is no longer the Church, but the devil's school."[14] In this sense alone is it true that the Church cannot err, though it becomes the servants of the Word, to cherish due humility and fear in expounding it, inasmuch as they are liable to the frailties of flesh and blood. In this sense he claims a monopoly of truth for the reformed as against the papal Church, which discards the supreme essential of Scripture teaching and practice for human inventions, and has made itself the devil's harlot. It follows that the papal Church has no right to ecclesiastical property and no claim to its restoration, by reason of its misuse of these endowments against the intention of their founders, which the Romanists themselves are fain to confess.[15]

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[12] "Werke," li. 507-508. [13] *Ibid.*, li. 508 f. [14] *Ibid.*, li. 518.

But is not the Reformed Church the result of rebellion against the Emperor as well as the Pope? It is no part of the Emperor's office, retorts Luther, to dictate in spiritual things. Whilst we give to the Emperor what is his, we refuse to give him what is not his, but God's. "God has committed enough to the Emperor, more, in fact, than he can undertake, viz.—the earthly sphere. Here his office has its limit. If he goes beyond this, he robs God of what is His. This is sacrilege, or, as Paul says, God robbery" (Phil. ii. 6). God alone will rule in the Church, and to vindicate His government is no rebellion.[16] Here, again, Luther has decidedly advanced beyond his earlier standpoint.

He next deals with the charge that the Reformation has had a demoralising effect on the morals of its adherents. He is fain to admit that the movement has fallen below his ideal. The devil has been at work in the reformed ranks. "Although we have the pure teaching of God's Word, and have established a pure, holy Church, as in the time of the Apostles, in all that is necessary to salvation, we are not holier or better than Jerusalem, God's own holy city, which harboured so many wicked people, though God's Word was ever preserved in purity by the prophets. So also among us is flesh and blood, yea, the devil among the children of Job. The peasant is wild, the burgher is avaricious, the nobility is greedy. We cry aloud and denounce, and do our utmost to make God's Word effective. God be praised, not without fruit. For those of the peasants, burghers, and nobility who give heed to our teaching are above reproach, and do more than they are asked, yea, some beyond their means. Even if they are few in number, God can help a whole people for one man's sake, as in the case of Naaman the Syrian and such like. In brief, there need be no dispute on the score of the practical life. We admit willingly and freely that we are not so saintly as we should be. This only we contend, that we possess such advantages that Hans Worst and his like cannot, with a good conscience, find fault with us before God and the world, unless they are more pious than we."[17] Let them first cast out the beam from their own eye, which is big enough, before they attempt to magnify the mote in their brother's. They are utterly ignorant of the real character of the Reformation movement, which they asperse with their own dirt. Witness the ridiculous charge that the whole thing originated in the rivalry between the Elector Frederick and the Elector of Maintz, in refuting which he gives interesting personal reminiscences of the Indulgence controversy, and the part played by him in this and subsequent events.[18]

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[15] "Werke," li. 522 f.

[16] *Ibid.*, li. 532-536.

As to the charge of drunkenness against the Elector John Frederick, he admits that his gracious lord at times takes a glass more than he should, especially over the table with his guests. He does not approve of this practice, although his strength of body enables him to stand more than others. He deplores, too, the excess in drinking at all the German Courts and the spread of sexual disease, introduced from Italy into Germany. But he indignantly denies that he is a habitual drunkard. No drunkard could be equal to the harassing task of governing his large territories, which he performs so faithfully and effectively for the benefit of his subjects. Personally he is a model husband, and his Court is a mirror of good Christian living.

On the embarrassing subject of the Landgrave's bigamy, he leaves Philip to speak for himself. He recognises only one lawful Landgravine of Hesse, Duke George's daughter, and dismisses the subject with an outspoken protest against the deplorable conjugal relations of too many of the princes. "You princes, in part at least, are going in an evil way. You have, with your bad example, brought it about that even the peasants will no longer keep from sin, and have given us so much to do in this respect that, with our best efforts, we can hardly maintain the marriage state as honourable and praiseworthy, and restore it to its rightful place. Only it is not for Henry of Brunswick to cast stones in this matter, since all the world knows how he keeps his marriage vow in concealing his mistress, Eva von Trott, in a lonely castle, whilst performing her obsequies with full ecclesiastical rites in order to hoodwink the world."[19] Moreover, Luther does not hesitate to transform the suspicion of instigating the burning of the Protestant town of Einbeck[20] into a fact, and pillories him in his most lurid style as a murderer and an incendiary, as an offset to his charges against the Elector and the Landgrave, and as an example of the lawlessness and godlessness rampant on the Romanist side.[21] In reading these outbursts one is astounded at the extraordinary range of his vocabulary in the art of drubbing an obnoxious antagonist, or what the Germans call *schimpfen*. Yet he was far from being satisfied with his performance, which in all conscience is drastic enough; and in a letter to Melanchthon he is astonished at his own moderation! He attributes it to the state of his head, which has not enabled him to do full justice to his powers of attack![22] For the charitable reader, the state of his health must be allowed to atone somewhat for the violence of his temper.

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[17] "Werke," li. 536.

[18] *Ibid.*, li. 537 f.

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[19] "Werke," li. 549-550.

[20] Enders-Kawerau, xiii. 187.

[21] "Werke," li. 551 f.

[22] Enders-Kawerau, xiii. 300.

CHAPTER VI

LUTHER AND THEOLOGICAL DISSENT

I. Conflict with the Antinomians

Besides the ceaseless polemic against Rome, Luther was involved during these later years in the Antinomian controversy with John Agricola of Eisleben,[1] as well as in a renewal of the old feud with the Sacramentarians. As a native of his own birthplace, Agricola received a kindly welcome from the reformer on matriculating at Wittenberg in 1516. He became an ardent Lutheran, and for long held a place in Luther's affection second only to Melanchthon.[2] After taking his Master's degree in 1518, he was promoted to that of Biblical Bachelor along with Melanchthon in September 1519. He acted as Luther's secretary,[3] and in this capacity accompanied him to the Leipzig Debate. After his marriage in 1520, he spent a couple of years in the study of medicine,[4] and practised the healing art till he was persuaded by Luther to undertake the office of religious instructor of the Wittenberg youth, and reader in the parish church. "Thus," he tells us in his autobiographical notes, "God made me a preacher of the Word, and out of the physician made a theologian."[5] In 1525 he was appointed by Count Albrecht of Mansfeld Director of the newly founded Latin school at Eisleben. In addition to his work as headmaster, he distinguished himself by his literary activity, the most important fruit of which was his collection of German proverbs, and by his eloquence as a preacher, though he was never ordained to the ministry. In this capacity he accompanied the Elector John to both the Diets of Spires and to that of Augsburg. He had hopes of obtaining a professorship at Wittenberg, and the appointment of Melanchthon in 1526 to a newly founded chair in the Theological Faculty seems to have caused a rift in their friendship. He had to wait another ten years before Luther, at the Elector's instigation, summoned him to Wittenberg to take part in a conference on the Schmalkald Articles, with a view to his ultimate appointment to a chair.[6]

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[1] Known also as Dr Eisleben.

[2] Agricola quem post Philippum unice amavi.

[3] Thiele, "Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Leben des Johann Agricola, Studien und Kritiken," 253 (1907). Atque ex eo tempore factum est ut me ad omnia sua offitia perpetuo accerserit Lutherus. This is a valuable collection of autobiographical notes discovered on the margin of a Hebrew Bible used by Agricola. See also the article "Agricola," by Kawerau in Herzog-Hauck, "Real Encyclopädie," and his "Johann von Eisleben" (1890); Förstemann, "Neues Urkunden Buch zur Geschichte der evangelischen Reformation," i. (1842).

[4] Thiele, 253-254.

[5] *Ibid.*, 255.

By this time he had dissented from the theology, first of Melanchthon and ultimately of Luther himself, on the question of the relation of the Law to the Gospel. This deviation had first appeared in his attitude towards the Articles drawn up by Melanchthon for the visitation of Saxony in 1527, which emphasised the necessity of the preaching of the Law as well as the Gospel, in order to stem the demoralisation prevailing among the people. At a conference called by the Elector at Torgau in November of that year, Luther succeeded in bringing about an accommodation. But Agricola was far from convinced by his conciliatory explanations, and continued to advocate his views among his friends, and ultimately to asperse the orthodoxy of Luther himself. Luther paid no heed to the reports of these aberrations that reached him from Eisleben,[7] and it was not till the summer of 1537, after Agricola's settlement at Wittenberg, that he became aware, from a perusal of a series of Theses ascribed to him, and from three sermons which he published at the same time, of his Antinomian tendency. The Theses, which were anonymous, not only stated in uncompromising language his own views, but accused Luther as well as Melanchthon of teaching unsound doctrine on the relation of the Law to the Gospel.

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[6] Enders, xi. 144-145, 147-148.

[7] That Luther had, up to 1537, maintained very friendly relations with Agricola is apparent from his letter to Agricola's wife, 13th Nov. 1536, in which he promises to do his utmost to further his interests, "Z.K.G.," iv. 301-302 (1881), a collection of correspondence relative to his case edited by Kawerau.

The point at issue was whether repentance for sin is to be aroused through the preaching of the Law or the preaching of the Gospel. In his early period, Luther had taught that true contrition is the fruit of the perception of God's goodness in Christ, which leads to the hatred of self and sin. At the same time, he had emphasised the necessity of the preaching of the Law, which includes the moral law implanted in the conscience, as well as the Mosaic Law, and which by its condemnation of sin begets in the sinner the sense of his sin, as a preliminary of the preaching of the Gospel of God's grace. Under the Christian dispensation the Mosaic Law has, indeed, been superseded by the law of the land as far as the repression of crime and the maintenance of civil justice are concerned. Moreover, the believer is not under the Law, but under Grace, though even for the believer the Law is serviceable, in as far as it quickens the sense of sin and leads the sinner to seek and rely on God's grace in the life-long struggle with sin. The Law, which the sinner is incapable of fulfilling, and which begets only the sense of sin and condemnation, has no validity whatever for salvation, and in this sense Luther had all along emphasised the freedom of the believer, through grace, from the old dispensation. While, as the expression of God's holy will, it is of eternal validity even for the life under grace, its function, as far as the salvation of the soul is concerned, is negative rather than positive. It is there to convince of sin and beget repentance, and thus to lead the repentant sinner to have recourse to the grace of God in Christ, to the Gospel of forgiveness, which is appropriated by faith. Hence the importance of the preaching of the Law as a necessary preliminary of the experience of God's grace through the preaching of the Gospel. Whilst the Law is the antithesis of the Gospel, it is in this sense at least a preparation for Grace.[8]

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[8] See Loofs, "Dogmen-Geschichte," 718-722, with the relative passages in Luther's earlier works. Kawerau, article "Antinomistische Streitigkeiten," in Herzog-Hauck.

Agricola, on the other hand, carried the antithesis between the Law and the Gospel, which Luther had emphasised, the length of denying to the Law even the negative function of begetting repentance for sin. Founding on Luther's doctrine that true repentance ought to arise from the perception of God's goodness in the Gospel, and ignoring his additional insistence on the function of the Law in convicting of sin, he maintained that repentance is to be instilled in the sinner by the preaching of the Gospel, not of the Law. He came, in fact, to regard the preaching of the Law in any form as unevangelical, reactionary, and incompatible with the Gospel. This is the contention of the Theses ascribed to him, and the published works from which Luther seems to have extracted other equally obnoxious propositions.[9] Repentance, according to these Theses, is to be inculcated not from the Law, but from the Cross of Christ, as contained in the Gospel. This is the true evangelical teaching, as shown by the command of Christ Himself, to preach the Gospel of repentance and the remission of sin (Luke xxiv. 46-47, and other passages), and the teaching of Paul. The Law has nothing whatever to do with the justification of the sinner, even in its initial stage of repentance. Thus the teaching that the Gospel is not to be preached until the conscience of the sinner has been probed and shaken by the Law into repentance contradicts the teaching of Christ in these passages, which they wrest (*contortores*) from their simple meaning, and which it is essential to maintain for the preservation of true doctrine. The Law only proclaims sin and damnation. The Gospel both condemns and saves in teaching conjointly repentance and remission. It proclaims the wrath and righteousness of God as exemplified on the Cross, and conjoins the promise of God's grace revealed in Christ and appropriated by faith (Rom. i. 16-18). Whilst the antithesis of the Law and the Gospel has been purely taught by Luther and Melanchthon, they have departed from evangelical purity in seeking to mix up Moses and Christ. The Decalogue has its proper place in the municipality, not in the pulpit. "To the gallows, therefore, with Moses." Peter knew nothing of Christian liberty in exhorting to make our calling sure by good works (2 Pet. i. 10). To inculcate in the Christian community the virtues of the Law is to nullify the Gospel.

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[9] The Theses and these additional propositions are given in "Werke," xxxix., Pt. I., 342 f.

Luther at first contented himself with warning his hearers against this Antinomian teaching, in a sermon on the 1st July 1537, without actually naming Agricola or attacking him personally.[10] His confidence in him had, however, been shaken, and he was seriously concerned about the moral effects of the preaching, in this extreme form, against the Law. In this mood, which was, according to Agricola,[11] sedulously fomented by his enemies, he was liable to periodic fits of suspicion, and kept a sharp eye on his doings. At the end of August, Agricola learned through Melanchthon that he had expressed himself unfavourably regarding his forthcoming book, "Summaries of the Gospels," which was passing through the press, though he had previously approved of it in general terms. In his alarm Agricola wrote him a letter explaining the sense in which he taught repentance and remission, offering to submit his book for the inspection of Jonas, and to retract any error that might be found in it contrary to the Gospel, and assuring him that he was not conscious of teaching false or questionable doctrine.[12] He further sent him a statement admitting the necessity of preaching the Law unto repentance.[13] Whilst again generally warning his hearers against the Antinomians in a sermon on the 30th September,[14] Luther was satisfied with this explanation for the time being, and, in a friendly interview on the 12th October, assured him that his apprehensions had been due to a misunderstanding of his teaching, which was substantially in agreement with his own, and promised to advise his colleagues accordingly.[15]

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[10] "Werke," 13, 153 f.; "Corp. Ref.," iii. 391.

[11] In his "Denkwürdigkeiten" he mentions as the most inveterate of these Caspar Güttel of Eisleben, Justus Jonas, Bugenhagen, and Coelius, the Mansfeld preacher. Thiele, 257. See also "Z.K.G.," iv. 320. Melanchthon, on the other hand, adopted a mediating position and sought to maintain peace.

[12] Enders, xi. 266-267; "Z.K.G.," iv. 303. Enders and Kawerau wrongly assert that the work, to which Agricola refers in his letter, was the "Three Sermons," instead of the "Summaries."

[13] Verzeichnis was er bisher gelehrt habe, "Z.K.G.," iv. 304-305, Sept. 1537.

[14] "Werke," 14, 178 f. (Erlangen ed.); "Corp. Ref.," iii. 427.

The reconciliation proved, however, of short duration. In November, Luther had again become suspicious, and not only prohibited the printing of the "Summaries," but took him to task on the authorship of the Theses, and declared his intention of publishing them, with an emphatic condemnation of their contents, and holding a public disputation on the subject.[16] In vain Agricola sought to deter him from his purpose by disclaiming the authorship of them, and professing in the most emphatic terms his submission to his will and judgment.[17] In vain, too, the efforts of Melanchthon and Cruciger to mollify him.[18] The Theses accordingly appeared in the beginning of December, and were followed by a counter-series and by the disputation which took place on the 18th December. Agricola, who had aggravated his indignation by staying away from it,[19] again wrote to him, at Melanchthon's instigation, a letter of abject submission on the 26th,[20] which he at first refused to read. But, says Agricola maliciously, hardly recovered from the inebriation of the previous evening, he ultimately glanced at it on the morning of the 28th, as he was about to set out for Torgau. Some days after his return (6th January 1538), he withdrew from him, in his capacity of Dean, the right to lecture in the Theological Faculty.[21] Melanchthon then hit on the expedient of sending Agricola's wife to intercede for her husband, and Luther, who, as Agricola again rather maliciously remarks, was very submissive to the sceptre of his Lord Kethe, so far reacted to this feminine appeal as to agree to another reconciliation on the understanding that

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[15] "Z.K.G.," iv. 305-307. Agricola's letter to the Elector, 27th Oct. 1537.

[16] "Corp. Ref.," iii. 454. Letter of Cruciger to Dietrich, 24th Nov.

[17] Enders, xi. 290; "Z.K.G.," iv. 307. Agricola's letter to Luther, 1st Dec.

[18] "Corp. Ref.," iii. 461.

[19] *Ibid.*, iii. 482.

[20] Enders, xii. 49, wrongly dated 26th Dec. 1538.

[21] *Ibid.*, xi. 323-324.

Agricola should publicly rectify his errors, at a second disputation, in a new series of Theses on the 12th January 1538. Accordingly, having given the required declaration as the result of the debate, he gave him a certificate of orthodoxy and asked the other doctors present to waive farther suspicion and accord him the right hand of fellowship.[22]

In these two series of Theses and the relative disputations, Luther maintained that repentance involves sorrow for sin, with the addition of the intention of leading a better life. In other words, it is not mere attrition (the fear of hell), but real sorrow for, and hatred of, sin, showing itself in the desire of the good. Whilst the Law produces sorrow for sin by touching the conscience and begetting the consciousness of sin, detestation and even despair of self, it cannot produce the intention of the good. This is the function of the Gospel of God's grace, which calms the perturbed conscience and begets the good intention, which it is impossible to attain by the power of free will, as the scholastic theologians wrongly maintain. This second element of repentance—the love of the good and the hatred of sin—is inspired by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel. In this way he seeks to harmonise his early teaching, that repentance arises both from the Law, which begets the consciousness of sin and distrust of self, and from the love of the good and hatred of sin inspired by the Spirit through the Gospel. Hence the perverse view of those who, ascribing repentance solely to the preaching of the Gospel, deny the part of the Law in initiating the first stage of it, and would banish the preaching of the Law from the Church. This is in flat contradiction of the testimony of experience and the Scripture.[23]

Whilst it is true that the Law effects nothing in the actual justification of the repentant sinner, it is nevertheless true that it was given in order that it might convict of sin and guilt, with a view to justification. For this purpose it must be insistently preached, so that the sinner may be humiliated and realise the impossibility of justification by its means. Without this preaching he could not be made to realise what sin is, and what obedience to the holy will of God demands. Moreover, Christ, who came to fulfil, not to destroy the Law, would have come in vain if we were not under obligation to fulfil the Law. To reject the Law and neglect the preaching of it, as the Antinomians do, is, therefore, to nullify Christ, repentance, sin, and the whole teaching of Scripture, along with God Himself, its author,[24] and to beget a false security, contempt of God, and an impenitence worse than Epicurean. It is of no avail to argue that without the Spirit, acting through the Gospel, the Law only testifies to condemnation. If it did not condemn there would be no sin, and what need would there be then for a Saviour? In condemning, it is also the mouthpiece of the Spirit, since it was written by the finger of God, and all truth, of whatever kind, is from the Spirit. To prohibit the Law is, therefore, to prohibit the truth of God. Hence the madness of taking away the Law, in view of its conviction of sin. Does not Paul say that the sting of sin is death, and the power of sin is the Law! (1 Cor. xv. 56). In taking it away, therefore, you take away the fact of sin, which derives its power from it, and nullify the whole scheme of salvation by Christ, who by His death fulfilled the Law, and at the same time effected the remission of sin and enabled us, in turn, to fulfil it in spirit, until it is fully fulfilled in the new creature in the future life. Wherefore the Law will remain valid to all eternity, unfulfilled in the damned, fulfilled in the blessed. Thus it is satanic error to say that it was merely temporary, and that, like circumcision, its function has ceased.[25] Its threefold function, which he summarises at the end of the discussion, remains in operation, viz.—to convict of sin, to lead the sinner to Christ, and to show the believer what God requires of him.[26]

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[22] "Werke," xxxix., Pt. I., 466-468; "Corp. Ref.," iii. 482; "Z.K.G.," iv. 309; Thiele, "Denkwürdigkeiten," 259-261. The Theses are also given in Drews, "Disputationen Luthers in den Jahren 1535-45."

[23] First series of Theses, "Werke," xxxix., Pt. I., 345-347, and the disputation thereon, 360 f., with introduction by Hermelink.

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[24] Second series of Theses, "Werke," xxxix., Pt. I., 349. Revera autem tollit Christum, pœnitentiam, peccatum, et universam Scripturam, una cum ipso Deo ejus autore.

[25] Second series, "Werke," xxxix., Pt. I., 347-350, and relative disputation, 419 f.

He thus attempts to meet the Antinomian danger, which threatened to develop out of his own teaching on the antithesis between the Law and the Gospel, by emphasising the imperative necessity of the preaching of the Law in order to render the Gospel effective, and its eternal validity as the expression of God's holy will. The one-sided preaching of the Gospel to the detriment of the moral life of the believer stood in need of this corrective. This emphasis on the Law as an adjunct of the Gospel and on its fulfilment in the life of the believer through the operation of God's grace is, however, in harmony with that which he had laid from the beginning on the moral regeneration of the believer by faith. It does not really represent a change of view, but a change of accent in the face of the extreme antithesis between the Law and the Gospel, which he believed to be a dangerous perversion of his teaching,[27] and which, in spite of repeated disclaimers, he persisted in ascribing to Agricola himself, as well as members of his school. In the face of this tendency, he realises more clamantly than before the need for disciplining the individual Christian life as an essential part of the pastoral function. In this respect he has come into line with Calvin.

Even after the dramatic reconciliation of the 12th January 1538, his suspicion of Agricola erelong returned. In proof of the restoration of confidence, he withdrew, indeed, the inhibition to lecture, and obtained for him the Elector's permission to preach in the parish church.[28] "And so this was the end of my comedy," wrote Agricola, with much satisfaction, in his autobiographical notes.[29] In reality, it proved to be only a lull in the storm. According to Agricola the machinations of Jonas and the Mansfeld preacher,

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[26] "Werke," xxxix., Pt. I., 485. Lex docenda (1) ut ostendat peccatum, (2) ad disciplinam (pædagogia in Christum), (3) ut sciant sancti quænam opera requirat Deus, in quibus obedientiam exercere erga Deum possint.

[27] Loofs thinks that he was also influenced in this direction by Melanchthon, "Dogmen-Geschichte," 858-861.

[28] Thiele, "Denkwürdigkeiten," 262.

[29] *Ibid.*, 261.

Coelius, erelong set Luther once more on the warpath. Coelius, it seems, had written to him that Agricola was only awaiting his death in order to assert himself—a statement which he characterises as one more calumny.[30] Towards the end of August 1538 the inquisition against him was started afresh, and in self-defence he wrote a letter reminding Luther that he himself had formerly taught that there were two ways of preaching repentance and remission, by the Law and the Gospel, or by the Gospel alone. It was, he rather boldly declared, a fair question which way best accorded with the apostolic teaching, and it was essential to hand down this teaching intact to posterity. He appealed to the testimony of the Church at Eisleben in proof that he had never taught anything unworthy of the Church as the congregation of the saints (*congregatio sanctorum*).[31] "This letter," adds he, "set the Rhine on fire."[32] It convinced Luther that his former professions of submission were merely subterfuges. It even charged Luther with having formerly taught what he now recognised as satanic error. Hence the sharper tone of the new series of Theses and the third disputation on them, which took place on the 6th September.[33] In his most exaggerated style, when angry, he described the Antinomians as hypocrites and deceivers, who can only be actuated by bad motives. During the debate he fell foul of Melanchthon for his irenic attitude towards them. "You, Philip, are too indulgent towards the Antinomians, who have openly proclaimed, 'To the gallows with Moses.' You ought rather to help me in pursuing them as enemies."[34] It was in this bellicose spirit that he conducted the disputation, though he disclaimed personal animosity.[35] The Church on earth is not the congregation of saints, as Agricola asserts, but a mixture of the good and the bad. Nor is it true that by justification sin has been formally taken away, so that the believer is no longer chargeable with his sins. True it is that by the mercy and grace of God sin is no longer imputed to the believer, who is reputed righteous by God. But this does not relieve him from the obligation of fighting against the sin which remains as long as he is in the flesh. The believer is, in this sense, at the same time righteous and unrighteous, as the daily experience of sin proves, and so far he is subject to the Law. The Law must, therefore, be preached even in his case in order that he may thereby be incited to wage the lifelong conflict with the flesh, until he attains the perfect life in the world to come. Much more is it necessary to preach it to the unbeliever, in order that he may be roused to a sense of sin, and brought to a knowledge of himself.[36] He acknowledged, indeed, that in his early period he had taught that repentance ought to spring from the love of God, and had stressed the preaching of the Gospel rather than the Law. But only because this preaching was demanded by the then existing situation. "True it is," he says in a passage, which has a biographical and psychological as well as a theological interest, "that at the early stage of this movement we began strenuously to teach the Gospel and made use of these words which the Antinomians now quote. But the circumstances of that time were very different from those of the present day. Then the world was terrorised enough when the Pope or the visage of a single priest shook the whole of Olympus, not to mention earth and hell, over all which that man of sin had usurped the power to himself. To the consciences of men so oppressed, terrified, miserable, anxious, and afflicted, there was no need to inculcate the Law. The clamant need then was to present the other part of the teaching of Christ in which He commands us to preach the remission of sin in His name, so that those who were already sufficiently terrified might learn not to despair, but to take refuge in the grace and mercy offered in Christ. Now, however, when the times are very dissimilar from those under the Pope, our Antinomians—those suave theologians—retain our words, our doctrine, the joyful tidings concerning Christ, and wish to preach this alone, not observing that men are other than they were under that hangman, the Pope, and have become secure, froward, wicked violators—yea, Epicureans who neither fear God nor men. Such men they confirm and comfort by their doctrine. In those days we were terrorised so that we trembled even at the fall of a leaf. Wherefore, I say, we taught repentance from the love of righteousness, that is, from the Gospel, because the men of that time were too much crushed by the Papacy, and were driven to desperation—yea, lived in the very midst of hell, so that unless we wished them utterly to perish, it was necessary as quickly as possible to pluck them out of their misery. But now our softly singing Antinomians, paying no attention to the change of the times, make men secure who are of themselves already so secure that they fall away from grace. Therefore, I say, in response to their argument that repentance is to begin from the love of righteousness, it is indeed so to begin in the case of those who are and were afflicted and crushed, as we were under the Pope. I know by experience what this misery meant for one. From this misery I only gradually escaped, and even to-day I cannot look upon my Lord Jesus with so glad a countenance as He desires, because of that pestilent teaching in which God was depicted as an angry God and Christ as a stern judge, whilst all the preachers, canonists, and theologians were silent concerning faith in Christ, and the gratuitous remission of sin for His sake. Now, however, these Antinomians in preaching not repentance, but security, assuredly do not rightly divide the Word of God, but tear and dissipate it, and thereby destroy souls. Our view has hitherto been and ought to be this salutary one—If you see the afflicted and contrite, preach Christ, preach grace as much as you can. But not to the secure, the slothful, the harlots, adulterers, and blasphemers." [37]

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[30] Thiele, 263.

[31] Enders, xi. 399-400; "Z.K.G.," iv. 311-312; Thiele, 263.

[32] Enders, xi. 400.

[33] Not the 13th, the date hitherto accepted. See Hermelink, Introduction to the Third Disputation, "Werke," xxxix., Pt. I., 486-487.

[34] "Werke," xxxix., Pt. I., 577-578.

[35] *Ibid.*, xxxix., Pt. I., 527. Non pugno adversus Antinomos ex odio aut invidia, sed ex summa necessitate.

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[36] The fifth series of Theses and the relative disputation thereon, "Werke," xxxix., Pt. I., 354-357, 489 f. Luther had drawn up a third and fourth series, but had waived disputing on them after the agreement of 12th Jan., and it was on the fifth series that the disputation of 6th Sept. was held.

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[37] "Werke," xxxix., Pt. I., 571-574.

Luther would now be satisfied with nothing less than an absolute revocation, and Agricola, in his anxiety lest the Elector should deprive him of his stipend, was fain to comply. He submitted a draft of a recantation for revisal by Melanchthon, and even went the length of asking Luther to write one for him, in the hope of thereby regaining his goodwill.[38] In complying, Luther determined to expose at the same time what he considered his duplicity and leave no further room for dubiety in the matter. "I will seek the glory of Christ, not his," he declared at table, in reference to his request, "and will show him up as a cowardly, vain, and wicked man who has wrought much mischief to the Church."[39] The recantation accordingly took the form of an attack "Against the Antinomians," addressed to Agricola's enemy, Caspar Güttel of Eisleben, and issued in the beginning of 1539,[40] in which he certainly did not spare the delinquent. Whilst announcing with satisfaction his recantation, he denounces him as a would-be second Paul, who has sought only his own glory and plumed himself on his superior wisdom, and ascribes his errors to the inspiration of the devil, who thereby strives to pervert his teaching and undermine Christian discipline.

In his autobiographical notes, Agricola energetically rebuts the charge of seeking to subvert the ethical teaching of the Law, and accuses Luther of misrepresentation and even lying.[41] Meanwhile, in order to retain his salary, he refrained from publicly expressing what he thought of his "tyranny," and, on the strength of this professed recantation, he was nominated by the Elector a member of the newly established Consistory at Wittenberg. The accommodation once more, however, proved of short duration. Luther erelong scented, in a series of Theses which Agricola drew up for a disputation in the Faculty of Arts on the 1st February 1539,[42] a veiled expression of his animosity. "Ah, Eisleben, are you at it again!" he exclaimed, on reading the Theses at table on the previous evening. "God forgive you your bitter enmity. He is my witness that I loved you, and still love you. If only you would openly take sides against me and not attack me in this underhand way." [43] Next day he angrily intervened in the disputation to charge him anew with perfidy and persistence in his errors. His anger was intensified by the fact that the Faculty of Arts elected Agricola as Dean, as a mark of its dissatisfaction at what it deemed his harsh treatment.

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[38] Thiele, 263.

[39] "Tischreden," iv. 88, 30th Sept. 1538 (Weimar ed.).

[40] "Werke," l. 468 f.

[41] Thiele, 265.

[42] "Z.K.G.," iv. 314-315.

This time the breach between them proved irremediable. In spite of Agricola's specious disclaimer [44] of Luther's interpretation of the cryptic reference in the opening Thesis to Saul and Jonathan (1 Sam. xiv. 24 f.), there seems to have been some justification for his conclusion that this reference was a covert attempt to avenge the recantation and undermine Luther's authority. At all events, this latest outburst was the last straw that broke the back of their friendship. Henceforth Luther, in his writings,[45] lectures, and sermons, placed the Antinomians in the same category as Münzer and the Anabaptists, as the inveterate subverters of the Gospel and of Christian morality. His invectives ultimately (31st March 1540) drove Agricola, who had in vain complained to the Rector of the University (September 1539),[46] to appeal to the Elector for a judicial investigation of these unjust charges, which he describes in his notes as sheer lies. He had, he informed the Elector, endured for three years Luther's calumnies and striven in vain to conciliate him in the most abject fashion. These repeated submissions had only made matters worse, and now he was the victim of ceaseless denunciation and abuse. He denied that he had taught that the Law was of no validity for the Christian life, and that the believer might freely commit sin, as Luther asserted, and offered to stand his trial on these calumnious charges.[47] In a counterblast addressed to the Chancellor, Dr Brück, Luther sought to substantiate his accusations from Agricola's writings and the testimony of

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[43] "Tischreden," vi. 248.

[44] Thiele, 265.

[45] See, for instance, Von den Konziliis und Kirchen, "Werke," l. 599.

[46] Thiele, 267.

[47] Förstemann, "Neues Urkundenbuch," i. 317 f.

Caspar Güttel, from whom he had obtained information of his former machinations against him at Eisleben.[48] He and his "sect" had been playing him false at Eisleben before coming to Wittenberg. At Wittenberg itself he had striven to diffuse his views in underhand fashion and undermine his authority, whilst pretending friendship and agreement with his teaching. He is, in short, a second Judas, a double-tongued slanderer, whose doctrine is a dangerous travesty of both the Law and the Gospel. His complaints serve, in fact, only to confirm the truth of his accusations.[49]

Before taking action on Agricola's complaint, the Elector[50] submitted it for report to Melanchthon, Jonas, Bugenhagen, and Amsdorf. Luther's colleagues naturally found that his version of his teaching on the Law and the Gospel, and the inferences he drew from it, were substantially correct, and justified his energetic polemic on the ground of the practical danger inherent in it, as applied by the more extreme of his followers, if not by himself. "Many of these fantastic extremists falsely reason that though sin remains in the believer, it nevertheless can do him no harm because of his faith, and therefore he may indulge in adultery, incontinence, and other vices with impunity."[51] From this point of view the issue involved is not merely a theological, but an ethical one. The Antinomian movement in this objectionable sense is spreading, as the reports that reach Wittenberg from Lüneburg, Pomerania, and elsewhere show, and has justly aroused the anxiety of all right-thinking Christian people.[52]

On the back of this report came a communication from Count Albrecht of Mansfeld, urging Agricola's apprehension as a dangerous incendiary. The Elector accordingly instituted proceedings, and exacted from him a pledge not to leave Wittenberg meanwhile. Before the trial could take place he received an invitation from the Elector Joachim II. of Brandenburg to fill the position of court preacher, and took the opportunity of escaping from Wittenberg to Berlin in the middle of August 1540.[53] In the circumstances, one can hardly blame him for yielding to the temptation to break his pledge and remove himself from the neighbourhood of Luther. "Thus," commented Luther, "the tree is known by its fruits." [54] To Luther he remained "a perfidious and abandoned man" in spite of farther attempts to clear himself from the imputation of heresy, in the form of a missive to the ministers, Town Council, and community of Eisleben (9th December 1540),[55] and of his formal withdrawal, at the instance of the Elector of Brandenburg, of his complaint against the reformer.[56]

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[48] Enders-Kawerau, xiii. 32, 13th April 1540.

[49] "Werke," li. 429 f.; Enders-Kawerau, xiii. 40 f., end of April 1540.

[50] He also sent Chancellor Brück to interview him at Wittenberg, Thiele, 267-268.

[51] "Corp. Ref.," iii. 1036.

[52] *Ibid.*, iii. 1036-1038, 9th June 1540.

It is difficult to form a confident judgment on the merits of the controversy. It was, to a certain extent, conditioned by the personal character of the disputants. Throughout it Luther appears very touchy on the score of his personal authority, and very prone to resent a mere difference of theological opinion as a personal offence. He has grown very impatient of contradiction, even when supported by the plea of conscientious conviction; jealous of insubordination on the part of his followers, and inclined to be dictatorial in repressing it, as even Melanchthon at times experienced.[57] His inability to consider calmly the other side has grown with the years. He is apt to see heresy in honest difference of opinion, and has become as keen a heresy hunter in his own fold as the Romanists were in theirs. In his zeal for what he deems the true theology, he is apt to mistake what was largely a difference of standpoint and method for heretical error and depravity. Hence the exaggerated inference that Agricola's conception of the Law and the Gospel amounts to the subversion of both. In the face of exaggerations of this kind, there was some ground for Agricola's complaint of his persistence in imputing to him what he neither believed nor intended to teach. He really had some reason for regarding himself as the victim of Luther's misrepresentation and "tyranny," though, in his autobiographical notes, he expresses his sentiments in a bitterly vindictive spirit, which certainly does not tend to influence the reader in his favour. His real offence seems, in part at least, to have consisted in seeking to take a line of his own in opposition to the Wittenberg theologians. This was no doubt very presumptuous and provoking, especially in the case of one who had so long professed the part of an ardent disciple of Luther, and had enjoyed his friendship and favour in a high degree.

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[53] Enders-Kawerau, xiii. 176; "Corp. Ref.," iii. 1080.

[54] Enders-Kawerau, xiii. 176.

[55] Substantially a reproduction of the recantation which Melanchthon had revised for him towards the end of 1538. He subsequently withdrew this recantation, "Z.K.G.," iv. 459-460.

[56] "Z.K.G.," iv. 442-443, 4th Oct. 1540.

[57] See Melanchthon's admission to Agricola, "Z.K.G.," iv. 442. Sed est illius quædam Achillea vehementia in causis qui agit, quam tu non solus expertus es.

In view of this fact, Luther had some reason for seeing in his insubordination the evidence of unworthy motives and underhand tactics, and attributing this insubordination to vanity, overweening self-esteem, a craving for notoriety, ambition to form a school or "sect" of his own. In this judgment Luther's colleagues seem to have concurred, though Melanchthon was, to a certain extent, sympathetic and considerate in trying to shield him from Luther's vehemence. His repeated submissions certainly do not reveal a man of strong character. Such a man would not have explained away his views so repeatedly and so abjectly even to please Luther. This pliability may betoken the play of the unworthy motives ascribed to him. On the other hand, his profession of reverence for Luther's person and authority, whom he repeatedly acknowledged as his father in Christ, seems to have been sincerely meant, and helps to account for his vacillation between submission and self-assertion. It really was an audacious act in a man of his second-rate ability to challenge one whose word was law within the Theological Faculty, and misgiving might well at times take the place of self-confidence. Moreover, his livelihood depended on Luther's goodwill. A word from him to the Elector was sufficient to cancel his salary and frustrate the hope of promotion. His anxiety to retain his goodwill for the sake of his wife and children, which appears in his letters and autobiographical notes, is explicable enough.

Not a heroic attitude certainly. Nevertheless the fact of this dependence should have made Luther a little more considerate and restrained in his dealings with one so completely in his power, and whose conscience he had in any case, according to his own principle, no right to coerce.

Apart from the personal aspect of the controversy, it may be admitted that the issue was of very serious import from the ethical point of view. If there was room for difference of opinion as to the method of preaching repentance and remission (and Luther himself admitted variety of method in accordance with circumstances), there could be no question as to the obligation of so proclaiming the evangelical message that the ethic of the Gospel should be exemplified in the life of the believer. Luther's insistence on this cardinal fact of the evangelical preaching does him all credit. His contention was indefeasible and his insistence on it was not uncalled for, as the quotations from the reckless declamations on grace and the law, ascribed to Agricola and the Antinomian preachers, appear to prove. At the same time, Agricola emphatically, and with evident truthfulness, disclaimed the imputation of teaching Antinomianism in the objectionable sense. Moreover, it is open to question whether Luther, in his zeal for the true evangelical theology, did not make too much of such extreme statements of the Gospel of God's grace. The cry, " Moses to the gallows," did not necessarily mean a deliberate incitement to lawlessness of life on the part of the evangelical zealots who indulged in such reckless shibboleths. Luther himself had, on occasion, made statements of this kind which, if taken literally, would have proved Antinomian enough in practice. Agricola, in fact, professed to be vindicating the true Lutheran doctrine on the Law and the Gospel. Nor was the Antinomian movement, in the objectionable sense, so widespread or so practically dangerous as he and his colleagues represented. There does not seem to have been anything like a set attempt to transform the Gospel of repentance and remission into a Gospel of sheer licence, though this preaching might have such an effect in isolated cases. These tirades against the Antinomians, like the tirades against the Anabaptists, need not be taken at their face value. In the case of Agricola and others (Schenk, for instance) to whom the term Antinomian, in the opprobrious sense, was applied, either directly or inferentially, it really seems to have meant nothing more than a convenient label for discrediting a theological opponent. At all events, Agricola adduces the weighty testimony of a large number of notable inhabitants of the county of Mansfeld that he had not taught anything dangerous to Christian morality in his sermons at Eisleben, and that, on the contrary, he had strenuously preached against sin and licence.[58]

II. RENEWED CONFLICT WITH ZWINGLIANS AND RADICALS

Simultaneous with the Antinomian controversy was the renewal of that with the Zwinglians, who were not included within the Wittenberg Concord, over the sacramental question. Its renewal was due to a passing reference in his "Councils and Churches" (1539) to Zwingli's doctrine of the incarnation as Nestorian.[1] The reference called forth a protest in friendly terms from Bullinger, Leo Juda, and other Zürich theologians,[2] of which Luther took no notice. Two years later he again rasped their susceptibilities by ranging the Zwinglians, along with Münzer and the Anabaptists, as wicked heretics and blasphemers of God and His Word.[3] His animus against them was intensified by a letter from Altieri (26th November 1542), deploring the contention among the members of the evangelical church at Venice over this question, and appealing to him for an authoritative pronouncement.[4] The letter aroused afresh his ire against the Zürich theologians, to whose malign influence he ascribed the contention.[5] Hence the angry outburst against them in his reply (June 1543), as enemies of the sacrament, aliens in spirit, and drunkards (*ebrii*), whose influence is to be shunned as one would a contagious malady.[6] Another outburst against their "pride and madness" occurs in a letter to Link about the same time.[7] Two months later he took the opportunity, in thanking the Zürich publisher, Froschauer, who had sent him a copy of a Latin translation of the Bible by Leo Juda, Pellican, and other Zürich ministers, of communicating direct his opinion of them. With these preachers of error, who will accept no warning and lead the people along with themselves so miserably to hell, he can have no communion. "Therefore you may no longer send me their works. I will be no party to their perdition and their blasphemous teaching, but remain guiltless and pray and teach against them to the end of my days. God deliver the poor Church from such seducers. Amen. They may laugh at all this, but one day they will weep when the judgment of Zwingli, whom they follow, overtakes them."[8] No wonder that the Zürich theologians gave rein to their indignation against "the apostolic Brief of the insolent Lord Antipope," as Bibliander dubbed its author in a letter to Myconius.

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[58] "Z.K.G.," iv. 322-323; *cf.* 317.

[1] "Werke," l. 591.

[2] Enders, xii. 241-243, 30th Aug. 1539.

[3] "Werke," li. 587. Vermahnung zum Gebet wider den Türken (1541).

[4] Enders-Kawerau, xv. 26-28.

[5] "Corp. Ref.," v. 23, 62. Melanchthon to Veit Dietrich, 25th Jan. and 16th March 1543.

Equally overbearing was his treatment of Schwenckfeld, who endeavoured to commend to him his spiritual view of the Supper as a dynamic fellowship and union with Christ, the embodiment of a deified humanity. Caspar von Schwenckfeld, the scion of a noble family in Silesia, had the advantage of a university education at Cologne and Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, and had served at various princely courts before starting on his career as an evangelical reformer in Silesia. He owed to Luther the religious impulse that shaped his life and, though ultimately parting company with him on the sacramental question, retained his fundamental soteriological teaching on the corruption and religious impotence of human nature and its dependence for salvation on God's grace, operated through Christ. But his critical, independent mind erelong rebelled against the increasing dissension and dogmatism of the theologians, which tended too much to stress the importance of correct belief at the expense of the practical Christian life. His first book, published in 1524, was, in fact, an appeal for a more vital Christianity as the fruit of the new evangelical teaching. Whilst accepting Luther's soteriological teaching, he erelong disagreed with the Lutheran preachers in Silesia on the sacramental question, and his defence of his more spiritual view, in conflict with them, led to the intervention of Luther himself, in 1527, in the quarrel, and his withdrawal from Silesia two years later (1529). Henceforth, like Denck, he wandered from city to city in southern Germany, till his death in 1561, the object of periodic suspicion and attack on account of his theological opinions, which did not square with those of the various wings of the reform party, whether Lutheran, Zwinglian, or Anabaptist, though he had affinities in some respects with all these, and distinguished himself by his moderation and charity in controversy even with the bitterest opponents. Though firmly convinced of the truth of his own distinctive views, he hated the dogmatic, persecuting spirit, and always felt inclined to stand up for the so-called heretic for the time being. He was prepared to accept the Augsburg Confession as far as it accorded with the prophetic and apostolic writings. But that it was equivalent to the Gospel itself and should be subscribed accordingly, he refused to admit. To him it was no more than a fallible human document, like the writings and creeds of the ancient Fathers.[9] Christ alone is the Master, and he can only accept as the truth what the Spirit teaches him to understand and appropriate as the Master's message.

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[6] Enders-Kawerau, xv. 167.

[7] *Ibid.*, xv. 172.

[8] *Ibid.*, xv. 219-220.

In his theology he is nearer to Luther than spirituals of the type of Denck, whilst differing from him in some essential points. He stresses, for instance, the Lutheran doctrine of original sin and its effects in enslaving the will, and the necessity of the radical regeneration of the sinner by God's grace in Christ. He differs from him in his conception of the character of this regeneration. For him Christ is the eternal Word, or Logos who, by His incarnation and His exaltation to God's right hand, effected the regeneration of man in the sense of making possible for humanity the divine life which man had lost in Adam, and of which He was the perfect embodiment. As in Christ, as the result of His incarnation and exaltation, the human life was transformed into the divine life, so, through faith in Him, humanity is transformed into a new creation, immortal and divine. Through the new creative power, derived from Him, the human is ultimately absorbed in the divine, the life of the flesh in the life of the spirit. He farther emphasises the supreme value of the written Word as the revelation of God's will and work in the salvation of man, as the witness to Christ and His transforming power. At the same time, he stresses the importance of the inner Word by which the Spirit of God makes its power felt in the actual spiritual experience of the believer, and without which the external Word is inefficacious. With Luther, too, he conceives of the Church as the invisible community of true believers, but, whilst recognising its visible form, he regards the organisation of the reformers as merely a transient and preparatory phase of the true spiritual Church, which consists only of the regenerate community of God's people scattered over the earth. With him the emphasis is thus on the inner circle of believers, which Luther also had for a time thought of recognising, but had, from reasons of expediency or necessity, discarded for an ecclesiastical organisation in alliance with the State. For Schwenckfeld, on the other hand, it is the spiritual community, not the visible organised body, that essentially constitutes the Church, and the Lutheran State Church is a retrocession from the true Apostolic Church.

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[9] Arnold, "Kirchen und Ketzerhistorie," ii. 254.

In accordance with this conception, he spiritualises the sacraments, and on the vital question of the Lord's Supper he has no room for Luther's conception of the bodily presence of Christ in the elements. Luther, he holds, in retaining a material view of this sacrament, is lacking in spiritual discernment. The Lord's Supper, as Christ Himself teaches, is to be spiritually apprehended. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing" (John vi.). The body of Christ is a heavenly, not a material bread, of which the believer truly partakes, and by which he is spiritually nourished by the living Word, or Logos, of God through faith. Christ, who exists in a glorified, immaterial body, cannot be present in the bread and wine in a material sense. "Thus in the sacrament Christ truly nourishes the soul of the believer, not in a material, creaturely sense, but as the true heavenly bread, which is truly partaken through a living faith in Him, and satisfies the soul that thirsts and hungers for Him. In this spiritual manner we become one being and spirit with Him, and through Him with God the Father unto eternal life. This spiritual union is, however, not merely a union in thought or imagination, but a real and living union through faith with Christ's heavenly being, operated by the Holy Ghost."[10] He thus rejects consubstantiation, or impanation, as well as transubstantiation, and goes a certain length towards the view of Zwingli and Oecolampadius of the presence, to faith, of Christ in the Supper, whilst imparting to the sacrament a mystic and more than symbolic character. With them he also decisively rejects the Lutheran notion of the ubiquity of Christ's body in the physical sense, on the ground that, in His glorified state, His material existence has been divinely transformed and cannot, therefore, be materialised.

In his more mystic apprehension of the sacrament he is, however, nearer to Luther than to the Zwinglians, and in his writings on the subject he treats Luther with respect, in spite of his harsh treatment at his hands. He disliked and deplored the contentious and opinionated spirit of the theologians of all parties, and was eager not only to vindicate himself from the charge of heresy, but to foster a more tolerant and charitable treatment of conscientious convictions, of which he himself set such a fine example in his writings. To this end he sent Luther some of these writings in October 1543, with a letter explaining his standpoint, which, while emphasising a spiritual communion with Christ in the Supper, was essentially different from that of the Zwinglians. He added a request for an impartial examination of them, with a view to his vindication from the

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[10] "Apologia und Erclerung der Schlesier," C I., II.; *cf.* B II., Strassburg, 1529. I have used the copy in the collection of Reformation pamphlets in Edinburgh University Library.

Eutychian heresy, with which both Zwinglians and Lutherans had charged him. He claimed, in fact, that his conception of the deified human Christ was in accord with Luther's teaching in his work on "Councils and Churches," and his *Postille* on the Epistle to the Hebrews. He begged him to favour him with instruction from the Scriptures, if he found anything contrary to them in these writings, and professed his deep obligation to him as a religious teacher. "Although I cannot in all points subscribe to your views or agree with you, I am, nevertheless, conscious that, next to God and the truth, I owe you all honour, love, and goodness, because from the outset I have derived much benefit from your service, and have never ceased to pray the Lord God for you according to my poor powers."[11]

Both the tone and the contents of the letter deserved at least a courteous reply. Unfortunately, Luther, in his latter-day irascibility and intolerance, was incapable of any other method of dealing with opponents, even of the lovable type of a Schwenckfeld, than that of the drill sergeant. He bore him a bitter grudge for his free-lance activity in Silesia and elsewhere in southern Germany. He professed to see in him and his disciples the followers of Münzer—an entirely unjustifiable assumption, since Schwenckfeld had not the slightest sympathy with revolutionary violence. He spurned his overture with a gross malediction, which he charged the messenger to convey to him in an unsealed letter, so that all who cared might be made aware of his contempt and detestation.[12] Schwenckfeld is a second Eutyches, who fused the two natures of Christ, as Zwingli was a second Nestorius, who divided them. He is "a senseless fool" who understands nothing of theology, and out of his books the devil spews and passes his unholy filth. "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan, and may thy spirit run headlong with thee and all who share thy Sacramentarian blasphemies to perdition." [13] To this atrocious objurgation Schwenckfeld replied in a dignified and moderate confession of his faith, in which he rebukes the bellicose and uncharitable spirit of Luther and the Lutheran preachers, and begs them to bethink themselves of their own fallibility, and permit difference of opinion.[14]

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[11] Enders, xv. 244 f. On Schwenckfeld see the latest edition of his works by Hartranft, "Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum," i.-iii. (1907-1913); Arnold, "Kirchen und Ketzerhistorie," ii. 240 f. (1700); Jones, "Spiritual Reformers of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," 64 f.; Ecke, "Schwenckfeld, Luther und der Gedanke einer Apostolischen Reformation" (1911); Grutzmacher, "Wort und Geist" (1902); Troeltsch, "Die Sociallehren," i. 881 f.

[12] "Werke," 32, 397 (Erlangen ed.).

Equally drastic was his judgment of Sebastian Franck, who went farther than Schwenckfeld in his opposition to the evangelical Reformation in its organised form. Unlike Schwenckfeld and Denck, who were laymen, Franck, who had studied at Ingolstadt and Heidelberg, had ministered for some years as Lutheran preacher at Gustenfelden, near Nürnberg, before renouncing his office in 1528, and devoting himself to a literary career as historian and independent thinker. Luther's insistence on the enslaved will in his controversy with Erasmus, his surrender to the princes in his organisation of the Church, his rabid and unreasonable dogmatism in the sacramental controversy, the failure of the Reformed Church to effect a thorough reformation of individual and social life—all this seems to have contributed to alienate a spiritually minded man like Franck from the Lutheran Church. In his passage from the Lutheran to the spiritual standpoint he was influenced by Denck and Schwenckfeld, and especially by Bünderlin, the Anabaptist scholar and ex-Lutheran preacher, whom Denck had rebaptized at Augsburg in 1526. He was farther apart from Luther and more under the mediæval mystic influence than Schwenckfeld. He was the thoroughgoing champion of free will and the natural goodness which human nature has retained, in the depths of the soul, from its original creation, in spite of sin, and which can only be vitalised by the power of the incarnate Logos—Christ. He emphasises exclusively the inner living Word—the spirit, not the letter, of Scripture—in the spiritual illumination of the believer, and believes only in the invisible Church or the community of the saints, to the exclusion of the visible Church, whether reformed or unreformed. With Franck, Christianity cuts itself away from history as well as creed and sacrament, and becomes a purely subjective religion, which cannot be objectivised in institutions, or usages, or organisation, even on the scriptural model. Luther had more reason in his case than in that of Schwenckfeld for denouncing and detesting this extreme of radicalism, and treating its author with the silence of contempt. Even Erasmus could not stand this irrepressible free-lance, and took part in his persecution as well as that of the Anabaptists. Like Denck and Schwenckfeld, he experienced to the full the theological rabies of the period in the attacks of both his Romanist [15] and Protestant opponents, during his wanderings from place to place, and, like Denck, prematurely died in poverty at Basle.

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[13] Enders-Kawerau, xv. 276, 6th Dec. 1543.

[14] "Bekantnis und Rechenschaft von den Heuptpuncten des Christlichen Glaubens," ed. 1592, Edin. Univ. Collection of Reformation pamphlets.

It was only after his death, about the end of 1542, that Luther anathematised him as Beelzebub Franck in a preface to Frecht's book in honour of marriage (1545). "I had no wish during Franck's lifetime to write against him, since I held this wicked man in such utter contempt, and always thought that his writings would have no value in the eyes of all reasonable Christian people, and would thus within a short time vanish like the curse of an angry, evil-minded person." He was simply possessed by the evil spirit in renouncing the authority of God's Word, claiming to be its judge and master, shouting Spirit, Spirit, Spirit, and hurling against all who did not share his fancies the opprobrious cry of Flesh, Flesh, Flesh. What wonder then that such an infatuated limb of Satan could neither do nor teach anything good, but only blaspheme, disfigure, lie, and deceive. Like a dirty sow, he could only burrow with his nose in filth and stench. And so on in Luther's naïvely gross vein, which a refined modern taste has no desire to reproduce in detail.[16]

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[15] At the hands of Cochlaeus, for instance, "Von Ankunft der Mess, Ein Disputation S. Francken mit Antwort Joh. Coclei "(1533).

[16] "Werke," 63, 384 f. (Erlangen ed.). Franck's opus magnum is the "Chronica, Zeitbuch, und Geschichtsbibel," 1531. The term Geschichtsbibel means that, for Franck, history is a revelation of God and

We must make allowance for the irritating effect of this critical opposition on one who had a message and a mission to maintain and vindicate, and felt the heavy burden and responsibility of leading and organising the Reformation movement. Instead of helping in this movement, these critics might well seem to Luther to be harming and disintegrating it by their captious and doctrinaire perversity. From this point of view, his fierce impatience with them is explicable, if his harsh and warped judgment of them and their opinions is not, in some respects, justifiable or even excusable. With all respect for their independent spirit, we can hardly help asking what would have become of the Reformation as an organised force if it had simply and solely trusted to the spiritual illumination of the individual, and allowed rein to all the idealist and somewhat Utopian fancies and projects of the radical opposition, even of the high-toned type of a Franck. Unlike Schwenckfeld, who was an active propagandist and exercised considerable influence in the formation of small communities of like-minded people,[17] Franck was a thoroughgoing individualist, who exercised to the full the right of criticism, but had no taste for construction, or sense of its importance. Would the Reformation have had any chance of maintaining itself against the organised forces of its Romanist opponents? Hardly, though the evangelical leaders would have better served it in reckoning with this critical tendency, instead of merely ascribing to it a satanic inspiration. From the more practical point of view, Luther had some reason for his characteristic conviction that the devil, in the person of Schwenckfeld, Franck, and the rest of

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His works. It is a compilation—largely uncritical—in the fashion of the conventional chronicle, but reflecting his own observations and teachings, clothed in a fresh and living style, and making ample use of the weapon of irony. For his other more theological writings, see Hegler, " Geist und Schrift bei Seb. Franck " (1892), the standard modern work on the subject. See also Maronier, " Het inwendig Woord " (1890); Jones, " Spiritual Reformers "; H. Oncken, " Seb. Franck als Historiker " in " Historische Zeitschrift," Bd. 82, 385 f. (1898). Arnold devotes to him only a comparatively short notice, " Kirchen und Ketzerhistorie," ii. 281-283.

[17] The Schwenckfeldians still exist as an organised community in the United States.

these religious ideologues, was doing his best to wreck his reforming work.

In his latter-day atrabilious mood, even Melanchthon and Bucer were not above suspicion of seeking an accommodation on the sacramental question with the detested radicals in the Reform Scheme[18] which they drew up for Hermann von Wied, the reforming Archbishop of Cologne, in 1544. Melanchthon was in terror of a new explosion throughout the summer of this year. Luther saw the devil everywhere exciting division and disturbance in the Church.[19] His temper was rasped by a quarrel with the Wittenberg jurists over the marriage law, which he wished to reform, and the jurists insisted on maintaining in accordance with the Canon Law.[20]

It was in this atrabilious mood that he fired off his final volley against the Sacramentarians in September 1544 in " A Short Confession of the Holy Sacrament,"[21] at which he had been working throughout the summer.[22] The abolition of the elevation of the host as part of the celebration of the Lord's Supper at Wittenberg[23] had, it seems, given rise to the report that he had materially modified his doctrine of consubstantiation. To such an assumption, and to all further attempts to bring him to modify his position, the " Short Confession " should once for all give the quietus. " I, who am now about to descend to the grave, will bring this testimony and this glory with me to the judgment seat of my dear Lord and God, Jesus Christ, that I have in all earnestness condemned and shunned the fanatics and enemies of the sacrament — Carlstadt, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Stenckfeld (opprobrious travesty of Schwenckfeld's name), and their disciples at Zürich, or wherever they are to be found, in accordance with the command, ' A man that is heretical after a first and second admonition refuse' (Titus iii. 10)." [24] The idea, to which the writings of Schwenckfeld and other fanatics have given rise, that there is anything in common between his view and theirs on this crucial doctrine is utterly unfounded. He had, indeed, agreed with Zwingli and Oecolampadius at Marburg in the main articles of the faith, and had undertaken to leave this contentious question in abeyance for a time in the hope that they would ultimately realise their error. But Zwingli's "Exposition of the Christian Faith," published by Bullinger five years after his death (1536), had conclusively shown that he had been a false dissembler at Marburg. How could a man, whom his followers honour as a saint and a martyr, but who included Socrates, Cato, and other pagans among the saved, be otherwise than a heathen and a traitor to Christianity? "God preserve me, as He has hitherto done, from lending my name to the slightest article of such fanatics. . . . Much rather would I be torn in pieces or burned a thousand times than be at one with them." [25] Not only have they persisted in their abominable error; they have added insult to error, and have contrived to circulate their calumnies about eating a baked God and drinking a vinefied God. With such liars and murderers of souls, thank God, he has nothing in common. Nor will he waive his insistence on making his view an article of faith, in deference to their plea for freedom of opinion on such a subject, or their shallow arguments in favour of a spiritual interpretation, which he refutes anew. God has warned them plainly enough by the terrible judgment which he executed on Zwingli at Cappel what He thinks of such a plea and such arguments. The devil also has his martyrs, who have a harder task to merit hell than true saints heaven. Since they will not accept his repeated warnings, he will henceforth leave them to their fate as self-condemned heretics, who knowingly and wilfully seek their own damnation and with whom he will have no fellowship either in person or in print. He has no desire to go to hell with them. It is better to be a damned heathen than a damned Christian. [26] He who cannot believe this article, because it is against his reason, can as little believe in the incarnation or the Trinity on rational grounds. There is no alternative. "Therefore we say straight out, either believe all or believe nothing."[27] Heretics always begin by doubting one article; they end by doubting all. He has evidently forgotten that he himself was a heretic in the eyes of Roman Christendom, and that for his Romanist antagonists the process exactly fitted his own case. He has now, unfortunately, become an expert in attributing heresy to those who do not agree with him. All their profession of reverence for the sacrament is but a fig-leaf to cover their shame and sin; all their zeal on behalf of a good Christian life but a heathen thing, so long as they reject the Lutheran doctrine of the sacrament. In other words, to be a true Christian one must believe in consubstantiation exactly as Luther does. Let them not presume that, in abolishing the elevation of the host, he has renounced this doctrine. He had retained this rite only as a matter of expediency in order to counter Carlstadt's radicalism, not because it was an essential of his sacramental belief. In abolishing it he has only come into line with the majority of the evangelical Churches, which have abandoned this rite as a thing indifferent in itself, and but for Carlstadt he would have done so twenty years ago. It is not worth risking a schism in the Church over such ceremonies in regard to which, unlike doctrine, we may without sin exercise our freedom. Does not Paul exhort to be of the same mind one towards another (Rom. xii. 16; I. Cor. i. 10)? Strangely enough, he does not see that Paul's words apply to himself as well as the Zwinglians.

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[18] Enders-Kawerau, xvi. 60-61, Aug. 1544.

[19] *Ibid.*, xv. 298-299. Videtis ipsi, he wrote to the ministers of Nordhausen, quantas in Ecclesia turbas ubique excitet Satan, tot scilicet opinionibus fere regnantibus quot sunt ministrorum capita.

[20] *Ibid.*, xv. 313 f., 331, Jan. 1544.

[21] Kurz Bekenntnis vom heiligen Sacrament, " Werke," 32, 397 f. (Erlangen ed.); liv. 141 f.

[22] Enders-Kawerau, xvi. 6.

[23] *Ibid.*, xiv. 281-282 (June 1542); xv. 86, 110-111 (Jan. 1543).

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[24] "Werke," 32, 397. [25] *Ibid.*, 32, 400-401. [26] *Ibid.*, 32, 413.

The Confession is a characteristic illustration of the latter-day tendency to regard himself as the exclusive standard of evangelical orthodoxy, even to the extent of making belief in his own interpretation of the scriptural institution of the Supper the test of the true faith in general. He is grossly unfair to Zwingli as a large-minded theologian who, like Clement of Alexandria thirteen centuries earlier, was not disposed to limit God's providential purpose in history to the narrow horizon of the Jewish or Christian dogmatist. In refusing fellowship with Sacramentarians like him or Schwenckfeld he was, too, belying his own principle of individual freedom of thought, to which the Reformation owed its genesis. He showed, on occasion, that he could bear difference of opinion even on the critical question of the Lord's Supper, as well as on less fundamental points, and could be satisfied with unity in essentials, as in his preface to the German translation of the doctrinal statement of the Bohemian Brethren in 1533.[28] Had he shown more of this spirit in these latter-day controversies, he would have been more consistent with his principle of freedom and have rendered a real service to the Reformation. He farther errs in assuming, as he virtually does, that he is the Reformation. The Reformation largely owed its inception to him, though Zwingli certainly had a claim to his own individual share in it. But it erelong became too wide and complex a movement to be contained within the mould of a single mind, however gifted and powerful. Luther grievously erred in ignoring or condemning the variety of religious thought and experience to which his own teaching gave the impulse, but which could not fail, in virtue of this variety, to outrun the limits of this teaching. Even Melanchthon and others of his colleagues winced under the bondage of his masterful personality and his periodic fits of ill-humour and violent objurgation in these declining years, when he has become too apt to see God in himself and the devil in every one who opposes him. Of this growing tendency the "Short Confession" is a really tragic illustration. In this mood he paid no attention to Bullinger's reproachful reply,[29] and persisted to the end in refusing fellowship with these inveterate enemies of the true faith.[30]

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[27] "Werke," 32, 415.

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[28] "Werke," xxxviii. 78 f.

[29] "Orthodoxa Tigurinæ Ecclesiæ Ministrorum Confessio" (1545). An abridgment of the German original is given in Luther's "Werke," liv. 126 f.

[30] Enders-Kawerau, xvi. 206. Letter to Amsdorf, 14th April 1545. Homines sunt fanatici, superbi, deinde otiosi. . . . Inveniet eos Judicium suum.

III. Luther and the Jews

In his declining years Luther extended his intolerance to the Jews. Twenty years earlier (1523) he had vigorously protested against their persecution in a work on the virgin birth of Christ.[1] In 1514, indeed, he had shared the current animosity to them, as his letter on the Reuchlin controversy shows.[2] But he had learned in the interval, from his own experience of persecution, to adopt a more kindly attitude towards the hated race of Israel, and the work on the virgin birth is a fine monument of this humanitarian spirit. It owed its origin to the accusation of his enemies that he taught the natural generation of Jesus. This accusation, which the Archduke Ferdinand publicly made against him at the first Diet of Nürnberg, was conveyed to him by the Margrave John of Brandenburg-Ansbach, through Schurf.[3] He was at first disposed to regard it as a jest, and, as was his wont in the case of the innumerable lies circulated against him, to take no notice of it.[4] But finding that it was seriously meant and widely believed by his enemies, he was compelled, "for the sake of others," to pen a refutation of this "ignominy." In so doing he seized the opportunity of seeking to convince the Jews both of the truth of the virgin birth and the Messiahship of the divinely generated Jesus.

He is not surprised that hitherto they have refused to admit His Messianic claim, in view of the barbarous treatment meted out to them by the papal Church. "For our fools the popes, bishops, sophists, and monks—these gross asses heads—have hitherto so dealt with the Jews that he who is a good Christian might well rather become a Jew. If I had been a Jew and seen how such blockheads and clowns ruled over and taught the Christian faith, I would rather have become a sow than a Christian. For they have treated the Jews as if they were dogs and not men, and have done nothing except vilify them and rob them of their property. They have never sought to show them the Gospel in its true light, but have foisted on them their own distorted papal and monkish form of it. . . . On the other hand, I have learned from pious converted Jews that, if they had not been made aware of the Gospel as it has been rediscovered in our time, they would have remained in heart Jews under the mantle of a false Christianity."[5] He, therefore, hopes that, by treating them in a friendly manner and expounding to them the real Gospel, many of them will become true Christians, and come over to the faith of their ancestors, the prophets and the patriarchs, who foresaw and proclaimed the Christ. So far the papal Church has only succeeded in hindering their conversion, and if the apostles had adopted the same barbarous method in dealing with the pagans, not a single pagan would have become a Christian. Moreover, the Jews are of the race of Christ. To them only was the divine revelation made, and on this ground alone they ought to be treated with consideration and respect. "I, therefore, beg my dear papists, when they get tired of abusing me as a heretic, to bethink themselves and abuse me as a Jew."[6]

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[1] Dass Jesus Christus ein geborner Jude Sei, "Werke," xi. 314 f.

[2] Enders, i. 15 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, iv. 66. Letter to Spalatin, 22nd Jan. 1523.

[4] Ego frenesin primum joco accepi, verum sic asserentibus, verum esse credere coactus sum. *Ibid.*, iv. 66.

In this friendly spirit he proceeds to review a number of passages of Scripture, from Gen. iii. 15 onwards, which appear to him to prove the supernatural generation and the divine being of Jesus, and thus convict the Jews of their error in rejecting His claim to be the Messiah. He assumes the current Christian view that these passages not only adumbrate the ultimate coming of a Messiah, but consciously refer to Jesus Christ, and received their fulfilment in Him. All the fathers and prophets of the Jewish race from Adam to Abraham, and from Abraham to the days of Christ, were, in fact, in this sense Christians. The Gospel was, indeed, reserved to them for the time being, and its extension to other races was only implicitly contained in the promise that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Thus the Jews, in accepting Christianity, would only be returning to the ancient faith of the fathers and the prophets. In his striving to substantiate this contention he does not hesitate to read the virgin birth into such passages as Gen. iii. 15, on the bruising of the serpent's head, as well as Isa. vii. 14, in reference to the birth of a virgin-born son. His exegesis of such passages is ingenious rather than convincing, and bespeaks the tendency to sacrifice the historic sense to his dogmatic prepossessions. The bruising of the serpent's head, or the blessing of all nations in Abraham's seed, is hardly a proof of the virgin birth. In the discussion of Isa. vii. 14, he does attempt to face the question whether the Hebrew term used in the passage means "a virgin" or merely "a young woman," and shows considerable knowledge of Hebrew philology. In this case he can argue with the Rabbis on the linguistic question on equal terms. Whether his conclusion in favour of the traditional Christian interpretation of the text would appear as irresistible to them as to him is none the less open to question. More forcible is his criticism of the persistent Jewish expectation of a Messiah, in the face of the destruction of Jerusalem and the final effacement of the Jewish State. Such an expectation is out of harmony not only with a historic interpretation of Scripture, which plainly points to Jesus Christ as the actual fulfilment of the Messianic hope of the prophets, but with historic reality. The fall of Jerusalem 1,500 years ago proved to be the final and irrevocable doom of the Jewish kingdom. To go on expecting a Messiah greater than Jesus Christ, whose spiritual reign has extended itself over the world, is a hopeless imagination. History has proved that the Messianic idea can only be realised in a spiritual, not in a material sense, and Christ is incontestably the unique founder of such a spiritual realm. "I ask the Jews when has such a man ever arisen in the Jewish race as this Jesus Christ, to whom so many peoples have adhered. David was a great man. Solomon also. But their rule embraced only a small portion of the Syrian land, whereas this Jesus has been received by the whole earth as lord and king." [7]

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[5] "Werke," xi. 314-315.

[6] *Ibid.*, xi. 316.

In conclusion, he protests anew against their oppression and the calumnies circulated against them. "If we would

[7] "Werke," xi. 330.

gain them, we must treat them not after the Pope's law, but exercise towards them the law of Christian love and show them a friendly spirit; allow them liberty to work and earn, and leave them scope to live with and among us, and hear and see our Christian teaching and life. If some are obstinate, what does it matter? We also are not all good Christians. I will leave it at this till I see what I have effected. God grant us all His grace. Amen."[8]

The work is a model of temperate and persuasive reasoning, even if some of its arguments are lacking in cogency from the point of view of a scientific historic exegesis. At this period he evidently had a genuine sympathy with a race which had, for so many centuries, been treated as an alien and an outcast among the nations. He was eager to offer its members the hand of fellowship in a common profession of allegiance to the Christ of the Gospels, in opposition to the disfigured Christ of the mediæval Church, whose brutal intolerance, so little in keeping with the spirit of the former, had done so much to alienate them. His correspondence with converted Jews like Bernhard, to whom he sent a copy of the work,[9] shows how eager he was to make amends for this brutal intolerance, in the hope that they would welcome Christianity in its evangelical form.[10] Whether this hope was likely to be fulfilled was very problematic. At all events he gave it the chance of an effective issue by studiously attempting to walk with cat's paw in the rough path of theological discussion, and, as he puts it, avoiding the manner of the sophists who have tried to drive out the devil only with the devil. Pity that he did not oftener essay the efficacy of this method of allowing his nimble and resourceful dialectic free play, and

[8] "Werke," xi. 336.

[9] Enders, iv. 147-148.

[10] That Luther was substantially justified in ascribing the antagonism of the Jews to Christianity, in part at least, to the abuses in teaching and practice of the Roman version of it, is shown, *inter alia*, by the story related by George Wishart of his encounter with a Jew whilst sailing up the Rhine. This Jew, whom, like Luther, he sought to convince that Jesus was the Messiah, controverted his contention by pointing to these abuses, such as the adoration of the host, worship of images, etc., as an insuperable obstacle in the way of accepting Christianity. Knox, "Historie of the Reformation in Scotland," i. 159 (ed. Laing).

resist the temptation to overlay his argument with objurgation.

His hope of achieving their conversion by a more considerate treatment proved illusory, and as this fact became apparent, he gradually modified his friendly attitude into one of unmitigated hostility. In 1532 he heard from Count Schlick zu Falkenau of a Jewish propaganda among the Moravians, which succeeded in seducing many of the mobile inhabitants of this sect-ridden region to the observance of the Jewish Sabbath and the adoption of the rite of circumcision.[11] From other sources he received evidence of their inveterate antagonism to Christianity, even in its evangelical form. In his "Table Talk," for instance, he tells of the visit of three of their Rabbis to Wittenberg, who discussed religion with him and whom he favoured with a letter of commendation to the authorities at Gleitz, begging them for Christ's sake to grant them free passage through Saxony. What was his amazement to learn that they had spoken contemptuously of Christ as the *Thola*, or crucified bandit, to Aurogallus, to whom they had shown the letter![12] Tales of their rapacity in exacting an excessive usury aggravated their impiety in his eyes. "Deservedly are these robbers driven into banishment on account of their impenitence and their usury," he exclaimed at table in 1536, apropos of one of these stories.[13] A similar outburst occurs in the "Table Talk" of June 1537 in reference to the request of Joseph Rosheim, the chief of the German Jews, for a recommendation to the Elector of Saxony, who, in a mandate of 6th August 1536, had forbidden the Jews his territory. "What use is there in showing favour to these villains who only work mischief to the people in gear and body, and strive to win many Christians to their superstitions."[14] Whilst still professing, in his reply to Rosheim, his desire to treat them with friendliness, and expressing his intention of trying to win at least some of them to a recognition of the true Messiah, they are not to presume on his favour to fortify themselves in their errors. He accordingly refused the request for his intervention,[15] and meanwhile penned a tract against the Sabbatarian movement in Moravia, in the form of a letter to a friend.[16]

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[11] "Tischreden," i. 149.

[12] "T.R.," iii. 370, 619-620 (1536); iv. 517; *cf.* "Werke," liii. 461-462.

[13] "T.R.," iii. 369-370.

[14] *Ibid.*, iii. 441-442.

The Jews with whom he has discussed the claims of Christianity are wont to parry his quotations from Scripture with the retort, they must believe their Rabbis just as Christians believe the Pope and their doctors. Well, then, can they deny that, with the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple worship and the priestly hierarchy have for ever fallen into abeyance, or fairly refuse to see in this overwhelming calamity the judgment of God on their rejection of the Messiah. All the specious reasonings of the Rabbis to escape this dilemma are pure perversity, in the face of the plain fact that the crushing fate of Jerusalem, the suppression of the temple cult, and the hopelessness of ever re-establishing the Jewish kingship these 1,500 years, are due to their rejection of the promised Messiah. It is sheer sophistry to say, for instance, as the Rabbis do, that the coming of the Messiah has been thus delayed because of the sins of the Jews. What are these mysterious sins of theirs for which God, who so often forgave their wayward wrong-doing, has thus delayed the fulfilment of His promises and the realisation of the new covenant with them, as proclaimed by Jeremiah? Either the Messiah has come, or God's promise is a mere deception. Only in the first alternative is the true solution of this dilemma, since God cannot lie or be untrue to His promise. The Jews have brought their fate upon themselves by their blind and obstinate refusal to accept the fulfilment of this promise and covenant.

As to their propaganda on behalf of the Mosaic Law, 'tis sufficient to remind them that, with the coming of the Messiah, the Mosaic Law was superseded for ever. In proof of this assertion he adduces a number of passages which he interprets in this sense with his characteristic dialectic agility and command of Scripture, and with considerable philological knowledge. As to the rite of circumcision, in particular it was imposed only on the Jewish people, and was not necessarily a condition of the acceptance of the true worship of God by non-Jewish peoples like the Egyptians, or the Ninevites and the Assyrians. Moreover, the new covenant with the Jews precludes the permanence of the old law.[17] But did not Jesus Himself say, No jot or tittle of the law shall pass away? Jesus, retorts Luther, was not speaking of the ceremonial law, but of the moral law, which was in existence long before Moses and the patriarchs. It is, in fact, the universal law of humanity, though Moses gave the clearest expression to it. Similarly, the Sabbath or rest day is a universal law in order that the people may assemble for the worship of God. But that they should assemble on the seventh day applies only in the case of the Jews, and the observance of this day is not incumbent on other peoples.

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[15] "Werke," 55, 186 (Erlangen ed.), 11th June 1537.

[16] *Ibid.*, l. 312 f. Wider die Sabbather. Enders, xi. 340, 15th March 1538.

His argumentation from these Scripture passages, which was in accordance with the method of the time, was not without a certain force from the standpoint of current Biblical interpretation. It would, however, have had more weight for the modern reader, if he had rather laid stress on the unique personality and the teaching of Jesus Himself as the grand proof of his claim to the allegiance of His own race as well as that of humanity. In ignoring this superlative fact and confining himself to the dialectic discussion of Old Testament texts, he gave his appeal less chance of achieving his purpose, which was still that of winning the Jews for the Gospel. Whilst professing this purpose, his tone is much less conciliatory than in the tract on the virgin birth fifteen years earlier. It naturally provoked a reply in which a Jew, in the form of a dialogue with a Christian, controverted his exegesis, and which Count Schlick sent him in 1542.[18] Hence the fierce anti-Semitic explosion, "On the Jews and Their Lies," which appeared in the following year (January 1543), and in which he gave full blast to his wrath, and lapsed into his most vituperative style.[19] It was the fruit of considerable erudition. It shows a knowledge not only of the exegetical works of Nicolas de Lyra and Paul Burgos, but of the Rabbinic lore and the anti-Semitic writings of both recent and earlier times. Though much more bulky than its predecessors, it largely follows the same line of argument in amplified form. He has frankly given up the Jews as incorrigible and absolutely renounces the Jewish mission. He now writes solely for the purpose of warning the Christians against the danger of associating with or tolerating the pernicious race in their midst. He lashes their racial and religious arrogance; thunders against their blind fatuousness in rejecting the Christ and clinging, against the clearest evidence of history, to their crazy expectation of a Messiah; pillories the calumnies which their Rabbis have invented and circulated against Jesus and His mother; hurls against them the counter-calumnies which Christian prejudice and credulity too readily charge against them, and which he is too furious to evaluate critically; exposes and denounces their rapacious, materialist, usurious spirit, which spoils and robs and ruins the Christians, and finishes by summoning the authorities to suppress the accursed race and prohibit their blasphemous cult. As he proceeds from one theme to another the work grows into a perfect hurricane of invective, a blazing volcano of hatred and fury, which blasts their character and their history, and exhausts even his fertile vocabulary of denunciation. "What now shall we Christians do with this rejected, damned Jewish people? To suffer them in our midst is not possible, in order that we may not become partakers in their lies, curses, and blasphemies. We can neither extinguish the inextinguishable wrath of God against them (as the prophets have it) nor convert them. We must, indeed, with prayer and the fear of God before our eyes, exercise a sharp compassion towards them, and seek to save some of them from the flames. Avenge ourselves we dare not. Vengeance a thousand times more than we can wish them is theirs already. I will faithfully state my own counsel. In the first place, set fire to their synagogues and schools, and what will not burn, heap earth over it that no man may see a stone or relic of them for ever. Secondly, pull down and destroy their houses, since they perpetrate the same nefarious things in them as in their schools. Pack them all under one roof or stable, like the gypsies, that they may know that they are not lords and masters in our land, as they boast. Thirdly, deprive them of all their prayer books and Rabbinic writings in which such idolatry, lies, cursings, and blasphemies are taught. Fourthly, forbid their Rabbis henceforth to teach. Fifthly, deprive them of the right to move about the country, since otherwise the people may learn from this book to take the law into their own hands and deal with them as they deserve. Sixthly, forbid them the business of usury and take from them all the silver and gold which they have stolen and robbed as the result of this practice, and use it for the maintenance of truly converted Jews and the old and infirm among them. Lastly, hand the strong young Jews of both sexes flail, axe, mattock, spade, distaff, and spindle, and make them work for their bread in the sweat of their brow, like all the children of Adam. Keep in mind the example of France, Spain, Bohemia, and other countries, confiscate the property they have amassed by their usury, and drive them out of the country." [20]

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[17] See also "T.R.," iii. 599-600.

[18] "T.R.," iv. 517.

[19] "Werke," liii. 417 f. For a notice of its composition, see Enders, xv. 47, 21st Dec. 1542. Hactenus in Judæorum me mersi furias. Nec adhuc emersi.

If the authorities refuse to follow this drastic advice, the pastors and preachers are at all events to proclaim it to the people. Whilst no one can be forced to change his creed, the preachers shall make it their business to fan the anti-Semitic spirit of their hearers in vindication of the Christian faith. " When you think of a Jew, commune with yourself as follows: The maw that every Sabbath curses and vilifies and spits on my dear Lord Jesus Christ, who has redeemed me with His precious blood, and, in addition, curses and prays in the presence of God that I and my wife and child and all Christians be stabbed and miserably destroyed—yea, would only too eagerly do it itself, if it could; has also, perhaps during this very day, often spat on the ground at the name of Jesus (as is their wont), so that the spittle still hangs in its beard—should I eat, drink, or speak with such a diabolic maw? Rather would I gorge myself from a plate or dish full of devils than partake with all the devils who dwell in the Jews and bespatter the precious blood of Christ with their spittle. God preserve me from such an enormity!"[21] Especially shall they make it their business to incite the authorities to do the duty they owe to God, and force the Jews to undertake manual labour, forbid their usury, and put down their blasphemy and cursing. "For if they punish the thieves, robbers, murderers, blasphemers, and other criminals among us Christians, why should they allow these devils freedom to exercise their detestable practices!"[22]

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[20] " Werke," liii. 525 f. (abridged).

The vitriolic fury which boils over in this wild polemic appears unabated in the "Schem Hamphoras," which followed shortly after (March 1543).[23] In this effusion he gives in Part I. a telling exposure of the Jewish calumny that Jesus worked His miracles by the use of this magic formula, and in the second part refutes their contention that, since in Matthew's Gospel only Joseph, and not Mary, was of the tribe of Judah, He could not have been a descendant of David.[24]

It is not surprising that these effusions evoked loud protests on the part of Bullinger, Bucer, and others of Luther's Sacramentarian opponents. Did Luther mean this frenzied outburst to be taken seriously? Are we, on the strength of it, to regard him as the sixteenth-century protagonist of Fascism as well as the prophet of a volcanic religious movement? It is difficult to believe that he soberly contemplated the literal application of such monstrous proposals. On his own confession he wrote much in the white heat of controversy that, on second thoughts, he would fain not have seen in print. At the same time, we cannot forget that he refused to retract a syllable of his wild fulmination against the peasants, and it is clear that in his eruptive and growingly intolerant old age, he has become increasingly liable to obsessions, and less and less able to control his blazing irascibility. Jewish defamation of the noblest product of their race was an abominable travesty of history and a gross outrage on Christian feeling. Jewish financial exploitation of the Christians was an ugly fact, and economically disastrous. On such grounds Luther had some reason for anger. But the defamation and the exploitation were not all on one side. The Christians could believe and circulate the wildest tales about the Jews, which seem to have had as little foundation in fact as the scurrilous stories of the Jews about Christ. They could profit as readily from the extortion and oppression of their fellow-Christians, as Luther admitted on occasion.[25] They had, moreover, driven the Jew to this execrable business by excluding him from other more legitimate means of livelihood. In his earlier, more discriminating attitude, he had given due weight to the logic of such facts, and pleaded for mutual toleration and consideration. He had emphatically condemned the anti-Semitic spirit of the centuries, and advocated persuasion in a friendly spirit as the only means of winning the Jews over to the Gospel. He had, in his work on "Usury," proposed to cure the evil of financial exploitation by the sensible expedient of limiting for Jew and Christian alike the maximum rate of interest to 5 per cent. Unfortunately, he was not capable of consistently maintaining the principles and methods which, in his saner moods, he preached and would fain have practised. He was liable to sudden psychic breakdowns under the influence of his volcanic temperament, or the obsession of his belief in the devil. In this neurotic mood the brake of self-restraint and reflection ceased to operate, and in the headlong rush of his rhetoric he could do his reputation and his cause infinite harm. Of this psychic instability, his eruption against the peasants, some of his polemics against the Romanists, and this tirade against the Jews are the worst instances.

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[21] "Werke," liii. 528.

[22] *Ibid.*, liii. 528-529.

[23] Enders, xv. 124.

[24] "Werke," liii. 579 f.

Happily, however, this is by no means the whole Luther, even of the Luther of these later explosive years. On the back of the "Jewish Lies" and the "Schem Hamphoras" came the third of the triad of the anti-Semitic writings of this year 1543—"On the Last Words of David." [26] In this production he strives in a calm and scholarly fashion to demonstrate from 2 Sam. xxiii. 1-7, and a couple of other

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[25] See, for instance, "T.R.," v. 257.

[26] "Werke," liv. 28 f.

Old Testament passages (Gen. iv. 1 and 1 Chron. xviii. 17), the divinity of Christ and the traditional doctrine of the Trinity against all heretics as well as the Jews. His exegesis, in part original and striking, is dominated, not by his hatred of the Jews, but by his Christological convictions, and though to some extent lacking in true historic and philological insight into the text, shows the genuine piety of his best religious mood. It reflects, too, the tolerance of difference of opinion which, in his more equitable mood, he could still profess and practise towards opponents in matters theological. What he claims for himself—freedom to follow his own judgment in the interpretation of Scripture—he is ready to accord to others, and leave the issue to the judgment of God. His reasoning would, however, have been more forcible had he refrained from distrusting reason in such matters and lapsing into his bad habit of denouncing it as a guide in theological discussion. "This time," he says, in reference to the interpretation of certain of the passages in question, which he had previously adopted from others, "I will be obstinate and follow no one except my own mind. Whoever is not pleased, let him reject it. It is not the first time that I write what is displeasing to others, and I am, God be thanked, well accustomed to such displeasure. For my part, I do not accept what others write. Let each see to it how and what he builds on his foundation—gold or wood, silver or hay, precious stones or straw. The day of the Lord will reveal it." [27]

At the same time, though he wrote no more against the Jews, he retained to the end his irreconcilable enmity to them, as his correspondence, "Table Talk," and sermons show.[28] He was infuriated at the report of the considerate treatment of the Jews by the Counts of Mansfeld in his native Eisleben. On hearing that an impudent young Jew had called its pastor a heathen (*goim*), and being asked what he would have done in such a case, "Boxed his ears," was the reply; "yea, if possible, I would have knocked him down and run him through with a sword. If it is lawful by human and divine right to kill a robber, much more a blasphemer." [29] His last sermon, delivered at Eisleben a few days before his death (15th February 1546), concluded with a fiery summons to drive them bag and baggage from their midst, unless they desisted from their calumny and their usury and became Christians.[30]

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[27] "Werke," liv. 31.

[28] See, for instance, Enders, xv. 168 (13th June 1543), 336 (9th Feb. 1544), 359 (Sept. 1543); xvi. 192.

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[29] "T.R.," v. 257.

[30] "Werke," li. 195-196. For a consecutive account of Luther's attitude to the Jews, see Lewin, "Luther's Stellung zu den Juden." See also Cohrs, "Introduction to the Last Words of David," "Werke," liv. 16 f. (1928).

CHAPTER VII

THE END AND ITS SEQUEL

I. DECLINE AND DEATH

THE last years of Luther's life were overshadowed by recurring ill-health. Since the violent attack of stone at Schmalkald in February 1537, which had brought him to the brink of the grave,[1] he had suffered periodically from this malady. These attacks, along with other ailments, had gradually undermined his strength, without, however, seriously impairing his intellectual powers and his extraordinary capacity for work. To them, as well as to the nervous exhaustion, induced by the strain of fully a quarter of a century of unremitting conflict and toil, were due the fits of depression, the weariness of life, the longing for the relief of death, which clouded these waning years. His natural buoyancy invariably reacted, indeed, against this pessimistic, valetudinarian mood, as it had reacted against the spiritual storms (*Anfechtungen*) which had periodically prostrated him at an earlier period, and from which in these later years he seems to have suffered less. His sense of humour, his fondness for jest and rough banter, remained to the end, and found characteristic play even in his dismal moods. His unflagging faith in God, his iron conviction that he stood for God's truth against the devil, the Romanists, the sects, and the world, never forsook him, and formed an unfailing rock of refuge from every storm. Numerous passages from his later letters and writings could be quoted in proof of this unswerving faith and conviction, which enabled him not only to keep his own head above the billows, but to inspire and comfort others who were passing through the deep waters. At the same time, the pessimistic note is there. His work becomes more and more a burden, too heavy for his enfeebled body to bear; his nervous system less resilient. Opposition frays his temper all too easily, and his increasing tendency to irascibility upsets his judgment of men and things, aggravates his sombre outlook on the world, makes him in his relations with his colleagues sometimes, as in the case of Carlyle, "gey ill to live with." He is clearly in these closing years suffering from overstrain, and in spite of his marvellous productivity, frequently complains of being "washed out." The effects of this overstrain on mind and temper are, as we have seen, patent enough in his later writings, and he himself is ready enough to confess his failings in this respect, whilst also holding fast to the privilege of pouring out on paper the vials of his wrath, as the chosen instrument of God's wrath, on the world, including not only the Romanists, but all who differ from him in doctrine. The sooner the end comes, the better, is the refrain of these sombre reflections on himself and the world.

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[1] Enders, xi. 197 f.; "T.R.," vi. 301-302.

In his correspondence and conversation the physical suffering and mental depression of these closing years are pathetically reflected. The presage of the end of an overburdened and careworn life casts its shadow over them, though the shadow is happily tinged with the silver lining of a believing optimism. One of these characteristic utterances occurs on the occasion of his visit in June 1539, at Lichtenberg, to the Princess Elizabeth, widow of the Elector Joachim, who, on parting, wished him another forty years of life. "God forbid!" was the reply; "I would have a hangman to chop off my head. So wicked is the world that one could wish for nothing better than one blessed hour and then departure to the next."[2] "I appear to myself a cold and useless corpse, for which a sepulchre is the only fitting habitation," he writes to Melanchthon in reference to a painful and wearing affection of the ear, from which he suffered in the spring of 1541.[3] "I am ill," he tells Jonas, on the same occasion, "and almost beside myself with the weariness of life and the misery of my maladies. Would that God would call me to Himself. I have seen and suffered evils enough." [4] "I am so weak," he adds a little later, "that I cannot read intently or speak for an hour on end." [5] To Jonas he also complains once more, in March 1542, of his exhaustion, and enlarges on the futility of battling any longer with the hypocrisy and deception of the lords of this world.[6] The same note of world weariness appears in a letter to Jacob Probst in the same month. "I am exhausted with age and work—old, cold, and all out of shape—and yet I am not allowed to rest, but daily tormented with all manner of business and the toil of scribbling." [7] "From the bottom of my heart I long for such a happy and peaceful release from this wicked world," he writes to Amsdorf six months later, on thanking him for his sympathy in the loss of his thirteen-year-old daughter, Magdalena—a blow from which he never quite recovered.[8] "The whole night I have neither slept nor rested, because of the torment of the stone," he informs the same correspondent in June 1545, "I am good for nothing to-day. I wish I were dead." [9] "I can do no more," he remarked to his students on finishing his course on Genesis in the middle of November of the same year, "I am weak. Pray God for me that He may vouchsafe me a good and blessed last hour." [10] "Pray our dear Lord," he replied to Bugenhagen, who reproached him for so often beseeching God to take him away, "that He may call me to Himself. I can do no more here below. I am of no farther use to you. Only help me to my end with your prayers." [11] He confesses to Amsdorf in August 1543 that he is out of touch with the times, and is living in a world which has become a stranger to him, and is ripe for the last trump. "Either I have never seen the world, or while I sleep a new world is daily born. The earth is full of iniquity."[12] He was so disgusted with the new fashions and amusements that had invaded Wittenberg, and so soured by his quarrel with the jurists, that he threatened to leave the town in the beginning of 1544, and during a visit to Amsdorf at Zeitz in the summer of 1545 he actually resolved never to return. He wrote to his wife to sell their house and garden and retire with him to their property at Zulsdorf.[13] Only in deference to the urgent representations of the Elector, his colleagues, and the Town Council, who promised a puritanic amendment of the evils which he seems to have exaggerated, did he renounce his pessimistic purpose.[14] If one were to take his words literally, he had been less successful than Calvin was at Geneva in disciplining the citizens and students. Probably his pessimistic judgment was overcoloured by the gloom of the moment, which disposed him to see unmitigated evil in habits and fashions which age and ill-health rendered him incapable of tolerating.

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[2] "T.R.," iv. 416.

[3] Enders-Kawerau, xiii. 318.

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[4] Enders-Kauwerau, xiii. 328.

[5] *Ibid.*, xiii. 351.

[6] *Ibid.*, xiv. 203.

[7] *Ibid.*, xiv. 218.

[8] *Ibid.*, xiv. 359. For the touching epitaph he composed for her, see "T.R.," v. 185-186.

[9] *Ibid.*, xvi. 249.

[10] "Werke," xliv. 825.

[11] Bugenhagen relates this in his funeral sermon on Luther, which is among the Luther pamphlets in Edinburgh University Library.

He returned to Wittenberg on the 18th August, suffering from an attack of his old malady, the stone, which left him, as he informed Amsdorf, in a state of great prostration.[15] Six months later the end came on the 18th February 1546 at Eisleben, whither he had travelled in the end of January, accompanied by his three sons, Jonas, and Aurifaber, to arbitrate in a dispute between Counts Albrecht and Gebhard of Mansfeld. In his frail condition, to undertake such a journey in the middle of an inclement winter was to court a fatal collapse. It was, in fact, as a dying man that he interrupted the writing of what was to prove his last and unfinished work ("Against the Asses in Paris and Louvain"), and took upon himself this task in obedience to his sense of duty to his native county and its rulers. "Old, decrepit, bereft of energy, weary, cold, and now one-eyed,[16] I write to you," he complains in a letter to Jacob Probst, a few days before his departure. "I had hoped that now at last peace would be vouchsafed to me as to a dead man (*emortuo*). And yet, as if I had never done anything, never spoken, written, achieved anything, I must still be overwhelmed with such toils. But Christ is all in all, both to do and to finish, blessed for ever."[17] During the journey and his sojourn at Eisleben, despite the inclement weather, his bodily frailty, and the protracted disputings with the Mansfeld jurists, his old playful humour breaks out in his letters to "his dear Kethe," in order to lighten the anxiety with which she followed his progress.[18] According to the reports of eye-witnesses, he was in his happiest mood during these weeks, overflowing in story and jest at table. The protracted negotiations, during which, weak as he was, he preached several times to crowded congregations, ended in an amicable agreement between the disputants on the 17th February. The same evening he had a heart seizure, which refused to yield to the remedies of the physicians and the tender care of the Countess of Mansfeld and others, who strove to assuage the paroxysms. The death struggle lasted for several hours before he quietly breathed his last, towards 3 o'clock on the morning of the 18th, in the presence of Count Albrecht and the Countess, his two sons, Martin and Paul, Jonas, Coelius, Aurifaber, the physicians, and his servant Ambrosius. During these last hours he recited passages of Scripture (John iii. 16; Ps. lxviii. 21) and repeatedly commended his soul to God, in the firm confidence in the life unending and the redeeming love of the Heavenly Father, as revealed in Christ. In death, as in life, he made proof of the Word as his anchor and his sole refuge. "Reverend Father," called Jonas and Coelius into his ear, a few minutes before the end, "will you die steadfastly in Christ and in the doctrine which you have preached?" "Yes," came the distinct answer, and turning on his right side, he slept quietly into eternity a quarter of an hour later.[19]

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[12] Enders-Kawerau, xv. 196. See also his pathetic "Exhortation to the University, Council, and Citizens at Wittenberg," 1543. Denn das were schrecklich zu hören fur Gott und der welt dass alhie durch mich bey dreissig jaren mit schwerer mühe und erbeit das Evangelium gepredigt, und neben mir auch viel andere; Und solte nu an meinem Ende das erlebt und hören müssen, das es nie erger gestanden weder jezt.

[13] *Ibid.*, xvi. 270-271, 28th July 1545.

[14] *Ibid.*, xvi. 278 f.; Kolde, "Analecta Lutherana," 416.

[15] *Ibid.*, xvi. 286.

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[16] A reference to an inflammation of one of his eyes.

[17] Enders-Kawerau, xvii. 11.

[18] *Ibid.*, xvii. 16 f.

Count Albrecht would fain have laid him to rest in the place where he had been born sixty-three years earlier. But the Elector insisted on transferring the body to Wittenberg, where, for more than half of these years, his life work had been done, and where, on the 22nd February, it was interred in the castle church in the presence of his sorrow-stricken widow and children and a great concourse of notables, students, and burghers.[20]

II. DEFEAT AND ULTIMATE VINDICATION

Before attempting a detailed evaluation of Luther and his work, I shall append, by way of epilogue, a rapid sketch of the more immediate issue of the movement which he guided and vindicated to the close of his stormy and strenuous career.

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[19] The firm faith of his passing accords with that of 1537, when he was so ill that he felt himself in the presence of death, "T.R.," vi. 301. The later story that he committed suicide by hanging himself from the bedpost is a myth, which first got into circulation fully twenty years later, and was duly authenticated as a fact by Roman Catholic credulity (supposed statement by Luther's servant and others, which needs no refutation).

[20] The details of Luther's last illness and death are given by Justus Jonas and Coelius, who were present and related these details in the funeral sermons delivered by them at Eisleben, 19th and 20th Feb., and in reports to the Elector, "Zwo Tröstliche Predigt über der Leich Dr Mart. Luther zu Eisleben," 19th and 20th Feb. (Wittenberg), 5-46. See also "Vom Christlichen Abschied aus diesem tödlichen Leben des Martini Lutheri bericht durch D. Justum Jonam, Mag. Michaelem Coelium und ander die dabey gewesen, kurz zusamengezogen." These are in the collection of Luther pamphlets in Edinburgh University Library. Jonas' letter to the Elector, the account of the Roman Catholic apothecary Landau, who attended him, and a number of other reports are given by Strieder in Lietzmann's "Kleine Texte," No. 99 (1912); Kolde, "Analecta Lutherana," 427 (Aurifaber to Gutt, 18th Feb. 1546); Karl Müller, "Noch ein Wort zu Luther's letzter Krankheit und Tod," "Z.K.G.," 407 f. (1928); "Corp. Ref.," vi. 58 f.; "Zwei Briefe aus den Tagen des Todes Lutheris," "Theolog. Studien und Kritiken" (1907). For the credibility of the official reports, see Walther, "Zur Wertung der Deutschen Reformation," 174 f. (1909), and Schubart, "Die Berichte über Luther's Tod und Begräbnis" (1917), with Albrecht's valuable review in "Theol. Studien und Kritiken" (1919). As a specimen of a carping Roman Catholic account, see Cochlaeus, "Acta et Scripta M. Lutheri," 314 f.

In one of his latter-day utterances he seems to forebode approaching disaster for Germany. Her rulers have provoked the wrath of God by their misgovernment and their inability to maintain justice and morality among their subjects. They themselves set a bad example by their evil-doing. The times remind him of the days of the prophets and the impending fall of the Jewish kingdom. "For the devil has become so mighty that many of the rulers themselves also act in the most wanton fashion. Those who should punish evil not only set a bad example, but are the ringleaders and inciters of it, so that one cannot but see and conclude it cannot long so stand, but must erelong break down. Thus it happened to Jerusalem before the Jews were carried away into the Babylonic captivity. I do not willingly take upon me the part of prophet; will not, indeed, prophesy. For when I prophesy, especially the evil, there usually comes more of it than I care to see, so that I often wish, with the prophet Micah, that I were a liar and a false prophet. For since I speak God's Word, so must it come to pass. In very deed, I greatly fear it will go with our German land as with Jerusalem (God help that my fear may be baseless and my prophecy false). We have seen before our very door how the Turk has overwhelmed and smashed the Greek land up to the German frontier through the wrath of God. Yet we pay as little heed as the Jews did to the anger of the Romans; go on in our sins, and become more and more a rusty iron pot, fitted only to be melted down and remade. Therefore, it is well that we should hold before our people the example of the destruction of Jerusalem, along with others of God's punishments, in the hope that it may be of some avail, and eternal disaster and destruction may be delayed. God's Word does work somewhat among us, and God's judgment does sometimes strike terror into wanton and stubborn evil-doers. For it is a sure sign that the devil has some calamity in store for Germany, inasmuch as he finds the Word of God among us—a thing he cannot abide. And since we do not better honour it and go on in our contempt and thanklessness, it will be said of us, 'Thou has not known the day of thy visitation.' In that case the game is up, and the devil has already won. For if we despise God's Word, He will despise us and separate Himself from us, as we have separated ourselves from Him. From this doom may God, in our time at least, mercifully preserve us."[1]

Luther's prayer that the impending doom which he foreboded might not come in his time was fulfilled. Before he breathed his last, this doom was, however, beginning to take shape in the blow which, as we have seen, the Emperor was meditating and maturing against his cause in the spring and early summer of 1546.[2] As the result of his skilful diplomacy in isolating the Elector and the Landgrave, and weakening the Schmalkald League, Charles proclaimed both of them under the imperial ban on the 20th July 1546.[3] He proved his superiority to them in military tactics as in diplomacy. They showed, indeed, considerable energy in concentrating a Protestant army of over 50,000 men at Donauwörth on the Danube in August. But they made the mistake of failing to intercept Charles's Spanish and Italian reinforcements on their march across the passes of the Tyrol, and allowing them to join the Emperor at Ingolstadt. Another attempt to prevent the advance of the imperial troops from the Netherlands miscarried. Had they attacked Charles before these reinforcements could have reached him, they could easily have overwhelmed his small army and forced him to submission. They thus lost the initial advantage of their numerical superiority. The series of manœuvres that ensued were indecisive, and gave time for the development of the plot which ruined the Protestant cause. This was the defection of Duke Maurice of Saxony, who, in combination with King Ferdinand, overran the Elector's territories. His treachery forced the Elector to hasten, with the main body of the Protestant army, to the rescue, and enabled Charles to impose terms on the southern cities, with the exception of Constance, on the basis of a promise of religious toleration, and on the Elector Palatine and Duke Ulrich of Würtemberg, and to re-establish Catholicism in the electorate of Cologne. John Frederick, meanwhile, not only recovered his electorate, but conquered Maurice's duchy. But the indecision and inactivity of the Landgrave,[4] who was not too loyal to his ally, enabled Charles to march rapidly northwards in the spring of 1547, and as the result of his superior strategy the Saxon army was routed at Mühlberg on the 24th April. Among the prisoners was the Elector himself. "So you now recognise me as Emperor," said Charles contemptuously, as the Elector made a move to kiss his hand, with the exclamation, "Mighty and gracious Emperor." "I am nothing but a poor prisoner to-day," was the reply, "yet your Imperial Majesty will treat me, I trust, as a born prince." "I will treat you as you deserve," was the snappish reply. Charles was too vindictive to be magnanimous, and the Elector was sentenced to death as a traitor, deprived of his territory in favour chiefly of Maurice, kept a prisoner in the camp before Wittenberg, and forced to sign the capitulation of the city which Luther had made the capital of a reformed Christendom.

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[1] "Werke," l. 666-667. Preface to Johann Sutel's "Evangelion von der grausamen, erschrecklichen Zerstörung Jerusalems" (1539).

[2] On the Emperor's diplomacy to this end, see, in addition to the authorities mentioned in ch. iii., sect. ii., Hasenclever, "Die Politik Kaiser Karls V. und Landgraf Phillips von Hessen vor Ausbruch des Schmalkaldischen Krieges" (1903).

[3] Walch, xvii. 1844 f. Erkennen, erklären, und verkunden sie also in unser und des Reichs Acht und Aberacht.

The defeat of the Elector was followed by the surrender and imprisonment of the Landgrave, in contravention of the promise of personal liberty made to him by Maurice and the Elector of Brandenburg, which Charles, who does not seem to have authorised it, ignored. Despite the resistance of the northern Protestant cities and princes, the defeat of an imperial force by Christopher of Oldenburg and Albrecht of Mansfeld at the Drachenburg, and the obstinate defence of Magdeburg, Charles seemed at last to have paralysed the Lutheran movement and to be master of Germany. Yet he was not really much stronger for his success. The victory over Lutheranism was a victory for the Hapsburg dynasty as well as for the Church. The princes were jealous of a power which, in overthrowing the Reformation, sought to diminish the territorial jurisdiction to which the extension of the Reformation owed so much. They refused at the Diet of Augsburg, which convened in the beginning of September 1547, to sanction the establishment of a league with an organised military force, as an attempt to buttress the imperial power at their expense, though it would have tended to make the government of the empire something of a reality, and not the sham that it was and long had been. They protested against the maintenance of Spanish troops in the empire as contrary to the condition of the imperial election. Nor could Charles afford, as the result of the war, to stamp out Lutheranism. He could not let loose the Inquisition against the heretic in Germany as in Spain. At most, he could only return to his old device—an accommodation—though this time the accommodation was decidedly in favour of Roman Catholicism. He was even unable to make use of the General Council to this end. The Pope had, in March 1547, removed the Council from Trent to Bologna in order to retain the mastery over its decisions, had refused to transfer it back to Trent at Charles's demand, had, in fact, been praying and intriguing, for political and papal reasons, for the success of the Elector against the Emperor, resented his interference in matters of doctrine, and would not hear of any irenic concessions to the Protestants. Charles was, therefore, driven to make a compromise on his own responsibility, which was drawn up by an imperial commission, consisting of the Catholic theologians, von Pflug and Helding, and the Protestant, Agricola, Luther's old antagonist and now court preacher to the Elector Joachim II. of Brandenburg, with the assistance of the Spaniards, Soto and Malvenda. This compromise, whilst recognising the episcopal office and retaining the Seven Sacraments, the Mass, the intercession and merits of the saints, surrendered the absolute supremacy of the Pope over the Church, split the difference in regard to justification by faith, and conceded clerical marriage and communion in both kinds. It was to hold good pending the final decision of a General Council, and was dubiously accepted by the Diet, under the name of the Augsburg Interim, on the 15th May 1548. Three days later Maurice presented his personal protest to the Emperor.

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[4] For Philip's attitude during this crisis, see Glagau, "Philip von Hessen am Ausgang des Schmalkaldischen Krieges," "Hist. Zeitschrift," 1905, 17 f. Whilst refusing to betray the Elector, he was negotiating for a feasible peace with the Emperor. For King Ferdinand's description of the battle of Mühlberg see "Nuntiaturberichte," ix. 677-678.

Its acceptance by the Protestants, whether voluntary or enforced, by no means solved the religious question. They were under the impression that it was to be binding on Roman Catholic as well as Protestant States, and were angered and dismayed on finding at the last moment that they had been deceived. Their anger was intensified by its enforcement on the south German cities,regardless of Charles's promise of toleration. Even Saxony was fain to accept a modified form of it, for which the pusillanimous Melanchthon was largely responsible, and which gave away much that Luther had contended for, except the Doctrine of Justification by Faith (Leipzig Interim, December 1548). Many of the Protestant theologians sought a refuge in exile. Bucer and Fagius emigrated to England. But the spirit of the dead Luther was not crushed. It lived in the more resolute of his followers, such as the Margrave Hans of Küstrin, Wolfgang of Zweibrücken, and the Princes of Anhalt, and in the north German cities which resolutely refused to accept the Augsburg Interim. The example of the imprisoned John Frederick in decisively rejecting it, in contrast to the compliant attitude of Philip of Hesse, his comrade in misfortune, helped to steel the opposition. The dissidents found resolute leaders in Amsdorf, Flacius, Erasmus Alberus, Nicolas Gallus, and others, who maintained from Magdeburg ("the chancery of our Lord God," as it was called) a strenuous pen warfare against the Interimists.

The Emperor was, moreover, unable to carry his policy of an accommodation in the Council which the new Pope, Julius III., had recalled to Trent in May 1551, and in which the Protestants declared their readiness to take part, on equal terms, on the basis of Confessions drawn up by Melanchthon for Saxony (*Confessio Saxonica*), and by Brenz for Würtemberg (*Confessio Virtembergensis*). There was, too, growing opposition among the princes to the Emperor on personal and national grounds. The continued incarceration of the Landgrave was resented by his son-in-law, Maurice. The protracted presence of Spanish troops and the influence of Spanish ministers aggravated the soreness on national grounds, whilst Charles's policy of rendering the imperial crown hereditary in his family and strengthening the central government, aroused the apprehensions of the territorial princes, Romanist as well as Protestant. He proposed that his son Philip should ultimately succeed his brother Ferdinand on the imperial throne in place of Ferdinand's son Maximilian, who had shown himself disposed to favour the Protestants. The imperial policy had undoubted advantages for Germany. A strong hereditary monarchy would curb the princely oligarchy and the territorial particularism, which tended to paralyse the central government and sacrificed the national interest to that of the territorial magnate. On the other hand, there was a serious danger that, with the consolidation of the Spanish Hapsburg domination in the person of a Philip, Germany would continue to be governed in the interest of the Spanish monarchy. On both grounds the proposal aroused the determined opposition of the Electors.

Personal and political thus combined with religious motives to nullify the effects of the blow which the Emperor had inflicted on the Protestant cause at Mühlberg, and prepare the way for the counter-blow by which the betrayer of this cause was scheming to rehabilitate it in the autumn and winter of 1551-52. Maurice seems to have been a pure opportunist, to whom personal advantage was the deciding factor whether against or for Protestantism. He had played the traitor to Protestantism because it paid him. He had some grievances against the Emperor. But they were of a personal kind, and he now played the traitor to Charles for the same reason. Whilst prosecuting the siege of Magdeburg, which capitulated in November 1551, he was secretly engaged in hatching a conspiracy with William of Hesse, who had his father's wrongs to avenge, Hans of Küstrin, who was actuated mainly by religious motives, Albert of Brandenburg-Culmbach, and John Albert of Mecklenburg, against his imperial benefactor. His diplomatic ability in negotiating the active alliance of Henry II. of

France (Treaties of Chambord and Fredewald, January to February 1552) certainly stood the Protestant cause in good stead, though at considerable cost to the integrity of the empire. The international situation was once more favourable to the vindication of this cause. France and England were now at peace. The Sultan was again on the war-path, and Charles's relations with Protestant England were strained over the question of the refusal of his English cousin, Mary, to conform to Protestantism. He had his suspicions of Maurice, but his self-confidence betrayed him into a false security, and in the spring of 1552 Maurice and his confederates, Albert of Culmbach and William of Hesse, were on the march to Innsbrück and the French in Lorraine before he awoke to the gravity of the situation. Resistance was hopeless, and his first expedient was to escape to the Netherlands. It was too late even to do this, and the only alternative was to hurry away, on the evening of the 19th May 1552, in a litter, through darkness and storm, over the Brenner, as far as Villach. But for a mutiny in Maurice's army, the august fugitive would have been taken prisoner.

The victors stopped short of revolution. They did not depose the fugitive in virtue of their own authority. They consented to negotiate through the medium of Ferdinand, and ultimately agreed to the Treaty of Passau, which assured a religious peace pending the meeting of a subsequent Diet. In a supplementary treaty, which, however, the Emperor refused to sign, the peace was to continue, even if the Diet should fail to achieve religious unity. Three years intervened before the final settlement by the Diet of Augsburg in 1555. Maurice was killed in a battle with his quondam fellow-conspirator, Albert of Culmbach, at Sievershausen (July 1553). Charles, who had embarked on an unsuccessful campaign against France, left the final negotiations on the religious question to his brother Ferdinand, at the Augsburg Diet, which sat from February to September 1555. As the result of these lengthy negotiations, the Lutheran princes would accept nothing less than the recognition of their right to profess the Augsburg Confession, and to retain possession of the secularised ecclesiastical property that was not immediately held of the Emperor.

They secured the abolition of the episcopal jurisdiction within their territories, which was thus practically transferred to themselves. They did not succeed in carrying the demand for toleration for the adherents of Luther in Roman Catholic States, but dissidents who refused to conform to the established religion, whether in Roman Catholic or Lutheran States, were to be at liberty to remove themselves and their property elsewhere. They were compelled, too, to submit to the stipulation that if any ecclesiastical prince became a Protestant, he should forfeit his lands and dignities (the Ecclesiastical Reservation), and to be content with a private declaration of Ferdinand in favour of toleration for the Protestant subjects of the ecclesiastical princes, which was not incorporated in "the Recess," or formal agreement, and did not, therefore, become law.

From the standpoint of religious liberty the Peace of Augsburg, which put a period to the conflict of thirty-five years, is disappointing. It was a victory for the territorial principle as applied to religion, not for real toleration, though it certainly vindicated the principle of the territorial, as against that of the universal, Church, and thus materially curbed the spirit of Romanist domination and intolerance. The subject must profess the religion of the prince, whether Catholic or Lutheran (*cujus Regio, ejus Religio*). It made the prince the arbiter in matters of religion, the absolute lord over the consciences of his subjects. Morally, as well as politically, it strengthened enormously the territorial power of the magnates, who had in turn proved the master in the struggle with the lesser nobility, the peasants, and finally the Emperor. The Reformation had thus not merely broken the unity of the Church; it had intensified the tendency towards the political disunion of the empire, and weakened German national sentiment, without achieving either true political or true religious liberty. True, it had helped to frustrate Charles's dynastic absolutist schemes, but in so doing it had worked into the hands of the petty potentates, who were practically absolute within their own dominions both in Church and State, and whose ecclesiastical absolutism (the *jus episcopale*) was to find classic expression in the work of Erastus. This Augsburg peace, moreover, conferred rights only on Catholics and Lutherans. It had no toleration for Zwinglians and Calvinists, not to mention the lesser sectaries. Even as between Catholics and Lutherans, it was only a makeshift, and while it prevented the further extension of the Reformation, it virtually guaranteed the preservation of the great spiritual electorates and the spiritual principalities which had survived the onslaught of Lutheranism. The German Reformation had, in fact, reached its limit at the hour of its greatest triumph. It bore in it the seeds of future strife which were to bring forth the bitter fruits of bloodshed and ruin in the terrible drama of the Thirty Years' War. The issue which it hushed up, rather than settled, was yet to be decided on the battlefield, not in the Diet or the Council.[5]

Though the Religious Peace of Augsburg was not a satisfactory conclusion from the point of view of a larger religious liberty, it must be judged in connection with the circumstances of the time. If it contributed to augment the ecclesiastical as well as the temporal power of the Protestant princes, it must be remembered that without their support the Reformation could hardly have succeeded in maintaining itself against the Catholic opposition and the reactionary policy of Charles V. Luther was compelled, whether he liked it or not, to support the princes, as the price of their support of him. Would there have been any Reformation at all without their alliance? The fate of Hus would seem to decide this question, and the fate of the peasants shows what a Reformation in opposition to the princes had to expect. Even Luther would have been crushed had there been no Elector to hide him in the Wartburg and no League of Schmalkald to intervene between him and the Emperor. As it was, the final treaty saved the work which Luther had achieved in co-operation with his princely patrons. It was, too, at least a limited contribution to the history of liberty. It meant the overthrow of the papal power, of the mediæval ecclesiastical domination over soul and conscience, as far as Lutheran

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[5] I have incorporated this paragraph and part of the preceding one largely from my "History of Modern Liberty," ii. 127-128.

Germany was concerned. It ensured for the persecuted Protestant, if not religious toleration in the modern sense, at least the possibility of escaping persecution by removing from the jurisdiction of a Roman Catholic prince to that of a Protestant one. It was thus an advance on the mediæval alternative of absolute submission to a universal ecclesiastical authority, despotically exercised, or death for refusal. This alternative could be evaded by at least Luther's followers in the Catholic States, and this represented no small advance on the mediæval spirit.

From the point of view of freedom of thought, the Lutheran Reformation may easily be weighed in the balance and found wanting. It is regrettable that its spirit was disposed to be so exclusively dogmatic, so hostile to rational views, so little inspired by a tolerant charity. It may, indeed, be described as a crusade in favour of liberty. But it was only liberty in a very partial sense—liberty in theory rather than in practice. We should beware of applying the term to it as if it meant what we to-day understand by it—a mistake into which too many confessional Protestant writers, who confuse the principle with the practice of the Reformation, have fallen. Luther, in some respects the great religious emancipator from the mediæval system, by no means wholly emancipated himself from the mediæval spirit, the mediæval way of thinking. He ultimately, at least, paid tribute to this spirit to the extent of trammelling the mind by accepted dogmas without subjecting them to independent criticism, or sufficiently realising that such criticism was applicable to them. He and his contemporary reformers took overmuch from tradition, and their successors tended to emphasise more and more mere dogmatic beliefs, rather than living, experienced truths, in a series of confessions, and in the formal scholastic elucidation and defence of them in elaborate theological systems. The result was to cramp the development of the great principles of liberty inherent in Luther's early teaching, to perpetuate the bad system of formal beliefs, buttressed by pains and penalties, to deflect theological study from the path of critical historical inquiry, and thus retard the progress of scientific theological thinking. It can, of course, be urged in defence of him and his contemporaries, that they, like ourselves, were unable to shake themselves free from the influences of the time, and to anticipate the future. They were only pioneers, and all that can reasonably be expected of pioneers is to initiate and blaze the trail for their successors. It may be said, too, that they had to construct as well as destroy, that in order to maintain the position they had won they had to systematise and organise. They could not afford to practise an indefinite syncretism that would please all opinions. To refrain from defining their position and holding it against the enemy would have been to risk anarchy and ruin the movement. Only men of strong convictions, of indomitable will, of overmastering self-confidence, could have done the work they did, and for this kind of work men of philosophic temperament, gifted with a far-reaching insight into the principles they professed, and consequently with an abounding tolerance, were less suited. The age, indeed, produced such, and many of them were prepared to suffer and endure for their larger views of truth, as well as propound them. But they were either radical sectaries born out of due season, prone to develop an extreme revolutionary wing, or solitary idealists, who were pushed aside by the strong personalities of the Reformation movement in its narrow dogmatic sense, and disowned and persecuted by them. Faith at such a religious crisis must be theologically "confessed" against the enemy, whoever he may be, in the sense of party articles. A certain intolerance is essential if the party is to win victory, and not invite discomfiture by vacillation and moderation. Intensity rather than width of conviction is the essential thing that carries the movement to victory, and with this intensity it is supremely difficult to combine the larger outlook that enables us to see convictions or facts in the light of the future. This must be borne in mind in the case of the Reformation movement, which was arrayed against all the prestige and power of the mediæval Papacy and Church, and could only develop in virtue of the concentrated energy of the fighting spirit that can neither give nor receive quarter. There is a good deal of truth in all this, judging from the exigencies of the cause and the time. But this does not obviate the fact that the actual Reformation fell far short of its first promise, and proved a case of arrested development, though it serves to explain why this was so.

Moreover, apart from the fundamental convictions characteristic of the movement, there was far too much of the contentious spirit in regard to subordinate points of belief, and this spirit tended to hamper rather than help it. It led to division and strife within the reformed ranks, to the antagonisms and antipathies due to temperament and personality, to the needless and baneful aggravation of intolerance. It split the Reformed Church into warring dogmatic groups, who fought each other on the meaning of a single text, or the importance of a merely personal view, and thus tended to reduce the movement to the level of petty personal or party wrangling. Confessionalism, with its inevitable narrowing influence, took the place of the independent search for truth. The tendency was to lay less stress on spiritual experience and more on Church dogma and sacraments. In this respect the Reformation became more and more a confessional, and ceased to be a truly emancipating movement. From this point of view it invites and deserves both criticism and censure, without exposing the critic and censor to the charge of merely being wise after the event, or judging it out of relation to its age.

On the other hand, we may not belittle its importance and its grandeur as a convulsive, formative movement. Even in its more strictly Lutheran form it was a wonderful achievement. As initiated and directed by him, it resulted in the vindication of the religious right of the individual against an ecclesiastical domination, which had lasted for a thousand years, and had withstood successive attempts, whether corporate or individual, to limit or overthrow it. In principle and, in its earlier phase at least, also in actual achievement, it was a mighty emancipation from dogmas and claims which had for centuries trammelled the religious and intellectual life, and relentlessly repressed individual freedom of thought and conscience. Even though it ultimately proved false to its cardinal principle of liberty, and became reactionary and intolerant, it could not suppress the principle out of which it was born, and to which it gave such an impulse in the struggle to maintain itself against the ecclesiastical absolutism enthroned at Rome and embodied in the mediæval Church. The earlier work of Luther as an emancipator persisted in the sects and thinkers, who protested against the later conservative and repressive reaction to which Luther, all too illogically and inconsistently, lent himself. Just as early Christianity was influenced by the religious and intellectual conditions of the time, its revival in the sixteenth century was moulded by the various spiritual currents which not even the mighty personality of Luther could control or neutralise. The critical spirit of Humanism, of which the reformers made use in the work of emancipation, continued to operate towards the larger freedom which these reformers, with rare exceptions, failed fully to apprehend or appreciate. The mystic subjective tendency, which the religious movement quickened and intensified, operated in the same direction. Both these influences found scope in the more advanced wing of the Reformation movement, which they inspired, and whose more enlightened representatives strove to carry the principle of individual liberty to its logical conclusion. Even Luther's cardinal doctrine of the supremacy of Scripture, as the norm of belief and practice, became in their hands a powerful plea for a larger toleration of discrepant religious thought and experience. From this point of view, the Reformation which Luther inaugurated was a force of incalculable prospective scope and efficacy. It may, indeed, be said that its importance and grandeur lie more in its potentialities than its actual achievement.

Lutheranism had spent its force as an expansive movement before it succeeded in extorting its legal recognition at the final Diet at Augsburg. It had overrun Scandinavia and started the Protestant movement in the Netherlands, which Calvinism was to complete, though Zwingli had also exercised an influence on its inception. It renewed the reform movement in Bohemia, made progress in Hungary and Poland, and imparted for a time an impulse to the movement in France, England, and Scotland, and even in Spain and Italy. Students from many lands resorted to Wittenberg, which, before the rise of Geneva as the militant evangelical centre of Western Europe, thus contributed many missionaries of the Protestant cause, who in many cases became its protomartyrs in their native lands. The early influence of Lutheranism in France, for example, is shown by the condemnation in 1521 by the Sorbonne of Luther and his works, in England by Wolsey's inquisition in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge against his adherents, in Scotland by the condemnation of Lutheran literature by the Scottish Parliament in 1525, and the martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton in 1528, and the exile of Alesius, George Wishart, and many others during the following decade.

But though Luther imparted a powerful stimulus to the spread of Protestantism in many lands, he was not destined to be the leader of militant Protestantism outside Germany and its allied Scandinavian lands. Even in Germany a not inconsiderable section of the Protestants owned the leadership of Zwingli and his associates, Oecolampadius and Bucer, and later of Calvin, who was destined to replace Luther as the master spirit not merely of a national, but an international, Reformation. His achievement as a reformer was mainly confined to Germany and Scandinavia, and even a large part of Germany ultimately remained impervious to his teaching, and either held by the old creed or adopted that of Calvin. At the same time, his greatness as the herald of one of the mightiest of religious revolutions should not be underestimated. Indirectly, if not directly, his struggle with Rome was the electric force that produced the thunderstorm of the Reformation throughout Western Europe as well as in Germany.

The check of the Lutheran movement was due partly to the counter-Reformation, which his reforming activity contributed to incite, partly to the dogmatic warfare between sections of the Lutheran party, which his death tended to intensify. This dogmatic strife arose from the modification by Melanchthon of certain doctrines to which the more staunch Lutherans, like Amsdorf and Flacius, adhered as distinctively Lutheran. Melanchthon incurred not unmerited reprobation for his pliability towards the Romanists, especially during the interval of Charles's triumph, when he gave vent to the increasing irksomeness and misery of his association with his dead masterful colleague. But apart from his timid pandering to the dominant party in the hour of Protestant defeat, he may claim the distinction of being a progressive Protestant theologian. He gradually veered away, on practical or intellectual grounds, from the Lutheran theology in regard to three essential Lutheran doctrines—justification by faith alone, predestination, and the Lord's Supper. He emphasised the necessity of Good Works as the testimony of justification. He adopted the view, in reaction from Luther's dogmatism against Erasmus, that the will co-operates in the salvation of the soul (synergism). He finally discarded the crass Lutheran belief in the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament and its corollary, the ubiquity of Christ's body, though he clung to the belief that Christ was somehow substantially present. Hence the controversies which raged throughout the second half of the sixteenth century between the strict Lutheran party, led by Amsdorf and Flacius, and the Philippists, as the followers of Melanchthon were called, and the Formula of Concord (1580), which sought to formulate an accommodation. Lutheran theology had reached the scholastic phase, and the dialectic subtleties and acrimonious personal infallibility of this later phase were as detrimental to the larger intellectual life, as well as to practical religion, as that of the mediæval scholastics themselves.

CHAPTER VIII

LUTHER AND HIS WORK (I)

I. LUTHER AS HE WAS

THE impression produced by his personality and his work on his closest associates is reflected at first hand in the funeral sermon preached by Bugenhagen, and the funeral oration delivered by Melanchthon to the great assembly at his burial. A man, says Bugenhagen, who never feared anyone, however great and mighty, in much the same words as the Regent Morton used at the grave of John Knox. Though to some he appeared too sharp and bitter in reproof and denunciation, this was his due prerogative as a prophet, as it was of Christ Himself in His conflict with the scribes and Pharisees. In his rôle as a prophet sent by God he rediscovered and vindicated the Gospel, and delivered the Church from the papal tyranny. The preacher can only liken him to the angel of the Apocalypse, who flew in mid-heaven with the eternal Gospel to proclaim to the dwellers on earth, and the effects of his divine mission can only be described in the words of the second angel, " Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the Great ! " In him had been fulfilled the words of Hus at Constance, " To-day ye burn a goose (Hus), but God will send within a hundred years a swan, which ye will not be able to burn." To Christian faith death is but the beginning of eternal life. Dead in the body, Luther will live in his work in accordance with his own prophecy, which it is for his followers to fulfil. *Pestis eram vivus, moriens tua mors ero, Papa* (" In life I am thy pestilence, dying I will be thy death, O Pope ").[1]

For Melanchthon Luther is the unique preceptor. He belongs to the long line of God-inspired teachers and leaders, who, from the days of the patriarchs onwards, have successively preserved and renewed the Church. In this succession he is worthy to stand beside Isaiah, John the Baptist, Paul, Augustine. He is the great renovator, not the innovator, of the Church, which he has striven to purify from crass error and abuse. Strife and division have ever been an inevitable concomitant of the working of God's Spirit at such crises in its history, and the blame and the responsibility for this division lie with those who will not hear the truth. He assumes that what Luther taught, in his long struggle with error and abuse, is the true doctrine, of which he gives a rapid summary. He combined in the highest degree the gifts of the great Christian teacher and the active reformer. As in the days of Nehemiah, the builders of Jerusalem rebuilt the walls with the one hand and held the sword in the other, so he had maintained the struggle with the enemies of the true doctrine, and at the same time, by his writings and his translation of the Scriptures, brought enlightenment and comfort to a multitude of burdened consciences. For this double work pious Christian hearts will be eternally grateful to him and thank God for him, however much the Epicureans and the Sceptics may decry it as mere theological and scholastic quibbling and quarrelling. The issue between him and his opponents was no mere scrimmage, as if, as the poets say, he had thrown a golden apple among a crowd of girls, who forthwith set up a noisy contention as to its possession. Nor was it, like the Sibylline oracle, vague and obscure. It is the clear and intelligible interpretation of what God has revealed through the mouths of the prophets and the apostles, and every pious, God-fearing heart can judge on which side the truth lies. He indicates, indeed, that there might be truth in the complaint of some—and these good-hearted people—that Luther was too hard and rough in his controversial writings. He will not enter on the subject by way either of excuse or praise, but will rather quote the reputed saying of Erasmus, "God in these last times, in which great and terrible diseases have prevailed, has given the world also a sharp physician." As God placed His Word in the mouth of Jeremiah, to tear up and break down, to plant and to build, so in the case of Luther. Those who would find fault with his harshness of speech may, therefore, direct their reproaches against God Himself, and will vainly enter into judgment thereupon with Him. God rules His Church, not according to man's counsel and wisdom, but raises up His own instruments, who are not in all things alike, and sometimes may go too far in their vehemence. Certain it is that, in defending his teaching, Luther was acting solely in obedience to his conscience and a passionate love of truth, not merely from quarrelsome and malevolent motives. All who knew him must bear him this testimony. They will, too, readily testify to his amiability, his kindliness, his goodness in private intercourse. " His heart true and without falseness, his utterance friendly and kindly, and his striving ever to observe the Apostle's command, ' Whatsoever things are true,' " etc. (Phil. iv. 8). Undeniable, too, his deep piety, his striving to exercise himself in the Christian virtues and in all good and useful studies and arts, his continence and freedom from vice, his readiness to conciliate and arrange the quarrels of others, his hatred of intrigue and trimming, his singleness of purpose, his constant recourse to prayer in the midst of the toil and stress of affairs, his unfailing courage in reliance on God's help as his immovable rock, his rare intellectual acumen and quickness in dealing with difficult problems and situations, his power of observation and ability to read character, his devotion to study, his wide knowledge, his aptness to apply it in his writings and lectures, and his wonderful gift of language.[2]

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[1] Uttered by Luther in his " Table Talk," " T.R.," i. 410.

The picture is, in the circumstances, naturally drawn from the angle of a great sorrow, a poignant sense of loss. The open grave is not the place for the critic or the candid friend. Nevertheless the words addressed by one who had been Luther's close associate as disciple, co-worker, and friend, for nearly thirty years, to an audience which had known him in daily intercourse for a longer period, leave the impression of having been uttered in sincerity and truth.

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[2] The sermon and the oration are among the Luther pamphlets in the Edinburgh University Library. The Latin version, in which it was delivered, is in " Corp. Ref.," xi. 752 f.

They stand in striking contrast to the carping and ill-natured estimate of the diabolic heretic with which Cochlaeus closes his "Acts and Writings of Martin Luther," and which is typical of the extreme Romanist attitude then and thereafter.[3]

In these funeral discourses we hear nothing about Luther's personal appearance. To the audiences to which Jonas and Coelius spoke in the Church of St Andrew at Eisleben, and Bugenhagen and Melanchthon in the castle church at Wittenberg, a description of his person was superfluous. For an impression of his figure and face, as he lived and toiled from the day that he had permanently taken up his abode at Wittenberg, we must turn to the notices of observers who have recorded their impressions, and to the authentic portraits of Lucas von Cranach, five in number.[4] The earliest of these portraits are the copperplates of 1520 and 1521. They show us the head and upper body of a monk in the habit of his order, with large forehead, high eyebrows, resolute, if rather sad, gaze, firm mouth, and protruding chin. The figure of 1520 is markedly emaciated; that of 1521 a little fuller. Determination and a rock-like strength are writ large in this haggard visage, especially in the 1520 engraving, *en face*. In the three authentic oil paintings, Luther as Knight George 1521, Luther as young husband (1525), and the 1526 portrait, the haggard face has become much fuller, and from the Wartburg sojourn onwards, he was a portly figure. The shorn crown is now covered with a shock of dark hair which falls over the upper forehead, whilst the eye and mouth have lost nothing of their resolute expression. The haggard yet forceful face of the engravings tallies with the description given by Mosellanus, on the occasion of the Leipzig debate in 1519, of the emaciated monk whose bones could be counted through the skin, though withal a manly, confident, energetic figure. Evidently Luther started on his active career with a strongly built frame, fitted to carry him through nearly forty years of toil and conflict, in spite of the additional strain of a highly strung temperament, and the handicap of an enfeebled digestion.

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[3] "Acta et Scripta," 314 f.

[4] Flechsig, "Cranachstudien" (1900); Preuss, "Lutherbildnisse"; Boehmer, "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung," 2 (1918); Schreckenbach and Neubert, "Martin Luther," 3rd ed. (1921, popular). Schuckardt's work, "Cranach's Leben und Werke" (1851-71), is antiquated. O. Albrecht accepts the portrait in the copy of the 1545 Bible in the State Library at Berlin as authentic, and ascribes it to Reifenstein. "Luther's Deutsche Bibel," iv. 587 f. (1923).

The engravings as well as the three oil portraits fail, however, adequately to discover to us the fact, noted by the same observer and confirmed by many others, that the resolute visage could relax in company, and even sometimes in controversy, into a kindly, jocose expression, in virtue of the large fund of animal spirits with which nature had endowed him. They fail, too, sufficiently to reflect the commanding mien and the dark, flaming eyes, which could cast such a spell on the spectator. "At 41," says Kessler, referring to his first view of him in 1522, "he was a fairly portly figure, held himself erect, bending more backwards than forwards, with face raised towards heaven, with deep black eyes and brows, sparkling and burning like stars, so that one could hardly bear looking at them."[5] Melanchthon speaks of his "lion eyes," which indicated the man of genius, though he says that they were brown.[6] Erasmus Alber, who describes him as of handsome appearance, was specially struck with the "falcon eyes" that lighted up his fair and manly face.[7] In the interview at Augsburg in 1518, Cajetan was impressed by the same peculiarity. "This brother," said he, "has deep eyes. Hence these strange phantasies in his head."[8] To Aleander his eyes were demoniac as he looked round the Diet assembled at Worms. To the papal Nuncio Vergerio they also suggested something demoniac in him—a sign, in fact, that he was possessed by the devil. In 1535 he seemed to him already old though but turned fifty, nevertheless so powerfully built that he might have passed for forty.[9] It was this flashing eye, rather than his stature, which, according to the Nuncio, was only of medium height, that lent its most distinctive trait to his appearance. There was also something arresting in his voice, which was not, as one might imagine, loud and full-throated, but clear, musical, and penetrative. "A fine, distinct, and pure voice," says Alber. "He was no great shrieker."

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[5] "Sabbata," 65 (ed. by Egli and Schoch, 1902).

[6] Dicta Melanthonis, "Z.K.G.," iv. 326.

[7] Wider die verfleuchte Lehre der Karlstadter, quoted by Köstlin, ii. 518.

[8] "T.R.," ii. 421.

[9] "Nunciaturberichte," Reports of the Papal Nuncios, i. 539 f.

There was a rich, human element in this ascetic figure which had strayed into a monastery to seek what was never meant to be his vocation. The social instinct was strongly developed in him. He had been the magnet of his fellow-students at Erfurt, and after the long interlude of his monastic quest for a gracious God, this instinct strongly reasserted itself in pursuit of the active life in the world. In view of this strongly marked instinct alone, it is evident that, in entering the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt, he mistook his vocation. Nature had made him to be a good husband and father, and in deciding to immure himself in the cloister, instead of founding a home for himself, he disappointed Nature as well as his disconsolate father. This social proclivity at length culminated in his marriage with Catherine von Bora in June 1525, and found full play in the home over which his "Kethe," as he called her, presided for the next twenty years. As he wrote to Spalatin in November 1524, he "was not made of wood or stone," though he did not at that time feel inclined for wedlock, in view of the strain and uncertainty of his life.[10] Like John Knox, he was, in fact, rather susceptible to feminine influence, and in another letter to Spalatin in April 1525 he jocularly refers to his thraldom to the fair sex[11] in terms which, though plainly referring to his preoccupation with the care of emancipated nuns and the question of the marriage of the clergy, have been interpreted by his detractors as evidence of his innate sensuality. That, on the strength of such unreflecting playfulness in a letter to an intimate friend, he had illicit intercourse with several nuns, and even with Catherine von Bora before his marriage, as Denifle maintains, is pure calumny. Melanchthon, whom he had not taken into his confidence in deciding to get married, and who, in his irritation at this oversight, concluded that he had allowed himself to be entrapped by feminine wiles into what seemed a hasty step, emphatically pronounces this report to be a downright lie.[12] The fact is that at his age (he was forty-two) his marriage was due to a mixture of expediency and principle, not to mere passion, though it seemed to Malanchthon unwise and unseemly in the circumstances (the horrors of the Peasant Rising). He felt the need of a helpmeet to conduct his household in the Black Monastery, which was sadly lacking in comfort, and care for him in his chronic indisposition. He felt pity, he tells us himself, for the forlorn Catherine, whose engagement to a young patrician of Nürnberg, which he had helped to bring about, had miscarried. He had completely emancipated himself from the evaluation of the celibate, self-centred life as the highest form of the Christian life, had discarded the monastic habit since October 1524, and had enlarged his conception of the family and the State as, equally with the Church, essentials of the divine constitution of things. He had weighed monasticism in his own spiritual experience and found it wanting from the religious and the theological points of view. He had found it not less objectionable from the human point of view as a travesty and a negation of the social instinct. The common life in the family and the State, with its obligations and its burdens, had become for him the true sphere of the Christian life—more truly a service of God than the mechanical and mistaken pursuit of the Christian virtues in the solitude of the cloister. It was the divine and the natural vocation of men and women, both as Christians and as citizens, to marry, beget children, bring them up by their toil and care to be useful and God-fearing members of the community, in order, in turn, to act their part in the common life of the home and the State. In this respect, as in the religious sphere, the individual Christian is subject to no artificial restriction, such as a tyrannic canon law has invented.[13] Luther, therefore, takes upon himself the holy estate of matrimony, if only, as he characteristically put it, "to vex the devil and the papists."[14] On the whole it proved a successful venture, though he was to discover at times, as he is fain to confess, that the married state has its crosses as well as its comforts. Children came in due course, three sons and two daughters, to bless their union and enlarge their joys as well as their cares and responsibilities. To Luther, wife and children were God's own gifts, in which he rejoiced with a keen and wholesome joy. His innate love of children enabled him to enter into their artless ways, and reveals, in such a pleasing light, the childlike spirit that underlay his rugged and forceful character. In Catherine he had found a careful, faithful, and devoted spouse, whose housewifely virtues he again and again celebrates in his correspondence and conversation, though their intercourse was not all smooth water. Like him, she was strong-willed and apt to domineer. He habitually speaks of her as "Doctor Kethe," in playful reference to this characteristic. She was also his equal in loquacity—was, he says, inclined to preach. Equally quick-tempered and sharp of tongue at times, and collision of purpose was not unknown. Unlike him, disposed to be rather grasping. Her economic management was, however, a needful, if, to him, at times disagreeable, antidote to his generosity and neglect of the worldly aspect of life. He was often in pecuniary straits. His salary was not over-liberal. He received and would take nothing for his works. He would not, he said, sell the grace that God had vouchsafed him. He gave away out of his slender resources with the left hand as well as the right. He had often enough to submit to the affliction of doing without his glass of beer. The good-wife had, perforce, to keep a tight grip on the household purse, and seems to have been naturally disposed to grip it too tightly. But her failings were overbalanced by her wifely virtues, and her husband's bantering criticisms were oftener than not only a veiled testimony of his appreciation and his affection.

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[10] Enders, v. 77.

[11] *Ibid.*, v. 157-158.

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[12] "Corp. Ref.," i. 753. For a discussion and a complete refutation of this calumny, see Boehmer, "Luther im Lichte der Neueren Forschung," 173 (5th ed., 1918).

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[13] See, for instance, among his later utterances on this subject, his Commentary on Genesis xliii. 449 f.

[14] "T.R.," vi. 276.

In this new relation his social qualities found ample scope. He kept open house for his colleagues and friends. He had many visitors, and under his hospitable roof not a few of his students and many a refugee from persecution found free board and lodging, or in return for a modest payment. His home was the magnet for a great variety of persons seeking his help and advice, which, as his correspondence shows, was ungrudgingly given. A large number of his letters is, in fact, devoted to this philanthropic object. Around the supper table he loved to relax from the day's toil in familiar talk, song, and jest, except when illness or overstrain, especially in his declining years, damped his spirits or fired his temper. He was no formalist, though treated with due respect by colleagues and students. He retained, in fact, throughout his career the simple, unpolished manner and mode of speech of the Thuringian peasant, tempered, of course, by the university education, the natural ease, the self-reliance, which fitted him to mingle without embarrassment in the higher social circles. In ordinary intercourse, kind and considerate ; at table, given to hilarity ; boisterous and playful ; seasoning wisdom with banter and genial humour, and thoroughly enjoying the good fellowship of the hour ; ever ready to communicate the fruits of his observation, his reflection, and his reading, or to discuss some aspect or problem of the movement, of which he was the centre and the leader—such is the figure of Dr Luther in his more mellow mood, as his associates and his disciples usually found him. There he sits when the day's toil is over, chatting, discussing, jesting, overflowing in anecdote, laying down the law in a mixture of Latin and German, leading or joining in the chorus of song which often interrupts the laughter and the talk ; so full of wisdom and common sense, if also of prejudices, likes and dislikes, so illuminating, so entertaining as well as didactic that, from 1531 onwards, there was always some Boswell among the listeners—Cordatus, Veit Dietrich, Schlaginhausen, Rörer, Weller, Lauterbach, Mathesius, Aurifaber, and others—busy transferring the feast of good things to his notebook. Every one was eager to have his judgment on men and things—on every subject under the sun. Hence the "Table Talk." Its variety of topic is phenomenal; the versatility of the speaker extraordinary. These notes form a huge repertory of anecdote, biographical detail, dicta on matters theological, philosophical, scholastic, ethical, and political; on manners and customs; on a whole gallery of notables, historical and contemporary; on the Pope and the devil; on magic and witchcraft; on astrology, alchemy, medicine, and law; on love and marriage; on himself and his experiences, and a multitude of other themes, the subject-index of which fills 200 pages of the sixth and last volume of the standard Weimar edition.[15]

In this legacy of common talk, as in portions of his controversial writings, there is sometimes reflected the grossness of thought and utterance characteristic of the age. Luther did not need to be the son of a peasant—a fact which he several times mentions with honest pride in the "Table Talk"—to make use of what sounds to us coarse expressions, and speak and write of things unmentionable by us. Though he retained the ways of "the gruff Saxon Boor," as he describes himself, the use of drastic and indelicate language was by no means confined to any one class. In what is called good society, so to speak and even write was a thing of course. In conversation and books alike it was fair sport to throw dirt and express one's feelings with the utmost licence of appellation and imagery. Luther's opponents were, as a rule, no better, and some of them were worse than he in this respect. It is, indeed, difficult to understand how Melanchthon could assert that Luther ever strove to observe the Apostles' command to follow whatever is pure and of good report. The explanation is that even Melanchthon found no offence against the current standard in this coarse manner of speech, and that Luther could indulge in it without necessarily being conscious of sinning against either God or good taste. Considering the enormous volume of his conversation, the gross expressions are very exceptional. Moreover, as Boehmer has pointed out, the coarse language of the time did not always convey to the mind the gross import which the use of the same words does to us.[16] The redeeming feature of this habit of vulgar utterance is that it certainly did not betoken in Luther's case, as it did in the case of too many of the humanist writers, delight in, or toleration of, obscenity of thought or feeling. Luther is the sworn foe of the low-toned, vicious disposition of which it was the expression. He roundly denounced "those pigs who only seek in marriage the gratification of the flesh."[17] He set his face against the moral laxity, all too rampant in every class. He deplored the licensed prostitution of the cities and demanded its suppression. He had ever at heart the moral education of youth, and in the "Table Talk" there is never lacking the earnest and insistent instruction and advice of the watchful moralist. At the same time, there is in him at times a lack of the sense of fitness, of what becomes his position and his dignity as a Christian teacher, which, even making allowance for the difference of taste, does seem inconsistent and compromising. He was too much given not only to bluster and rough jesting (*poltern*); his levity was at times out of place, both in regard to the subject and the proper manner of treating it. He was in this respect sometimes lacking in tact and fine feeling.[18] As we have seen, he undoubtedly allowed his hot temper to explode in witticisms, both violent and rude, at the expense of his opponents; and though he knew and confessed his sins in this respect, refused to amend this habit in deference to the protests of colleagues and friends. Pity that he did not learn from the New Testament to rise above the low level of the age and invariably cultivate "the good manners" which it inculcates, and "the speech which is good for edifying."[19] It is only too evident that the sense of Christian propriety, which applies to every age and condition, was only imperfectly developed in him, though we may allow the spirit of the time to palliate to some extent this failing.

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[15] "Tischreden" (1912-21). This source, though invaluable as an indication of Luther's personality and views on men and things, is to be used with caution. The reporters did not always give the true sense, let alone the exact words, of these dicta.

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[16] "Luther im Lichte der Neueren Forschung," 155. The example given, "Zötlein," in the passage in which Luther says that a "Zötlein" might be well pleasing to God, does not mean "foul story," but merely broad humour. See also Köhler, "Das Katholische Lutherbild," 37 (1922).

[17] "Werke," xliii. 451.

[18] See, for instance, the misplaced facetious reference to his wife shortly after their marriage. Enders, v. 222; Köhler, "Das Katholische Lutherbild," 45.

Simple in his tastes, Luther practised the simple life. Content with plain food, which he preferred to the rich delicacies of his princely hosts, he gave the hours of the day to hard study in addition to his professional labours, relieved by such recreation as he could spare time for in walking with a colleague or friend, or working in his garden. The portly figure of his later active life was not due to immoderation in eating and drinking. Melanchthon often wondered how a man of his strong build could subsist on such a moderate diet. He had, he says, known him for four days on end, even when he was quite well, eat and drink nothing, and often for many days limit himself to a little bread and a herring.[20] His habitual moderation has not spared him the charge of gluttony on the ground of the occasional humorous references to his enjoyment of the good things, to which he did justice at the table of John Frederick and other princely hosts.[21] Such indulgence, to judge from the tone of these references, was evidently exaggerated, and in any case was very exceptional. On his own testimony he greatly preferred the simple, nourishing, common food, which his Kethe provided for him in his own home. On the other hand, he thoroughly relished a good glass of wine or beer. On this subject he frequently enlarges with all the confidence and satisfaction of the connoisseur.[22] Luther lived in a drunken as well as a coarse age. He daily drank beer or wine—usually beer—at meals. He drank with his colleagues and friends at convivial gatherings. He drank a night-cap before going to bed. In his fits of depression he drank to spite the devil. He drank as a remedy against the stone. He drank to counter his chronic indigestion and sleeplessness. " Early this morning (January 1532) Satan was arguing with me concerning Zwingli, and I experienced that fasting is not always an advantage, and that a full head is more fitting to dispute with the devil than fasting. Therefore, edite, bibete (eat, drink), do yourself well. To those who are subject to temptations we advise good eating and drinking. Whoremongers ought, however, to fast."[23] He even did not consider " a good tipple " as one of the deadly sins, provided it did not lead to excess,[24] and took part with zest in the conviviality of professorial and student life and the domestic board. That he drank to excess in accordance with the practice of the time—was, in fact, a sot (*säufer*) as well as a glutton, as his more ill-natured critics maintain—is, however, a malevolent assumption. Here again the tendency to exaggerate, so characteristic of his humour, has played into the hands of his enemies. When, in the letters to his wife in 1540, he tells her that he is guttling like a Bohemian and swilling like a German, he adds, in case even she might take his jovial words literally, that he is doing neither to excess (*doch nicht viel*—" nevertheless not much "). Another evidence of his immoderate love of drink—the couplet in which he is supposed to have glorified wine, woman, and song—was certainly not either written or spoken by him.[25] But did he not sign himself Doctor *Plenus* (full) in a letter written in March 1535 ?[26] The answer is in the negative, *Plenus* being a mistaken deciphering of the word " Hanns " in the original, and referring to his little son Hans, who greets his godfather, Caspar Müller, to whom the letter was addressed.[27] So with the other passages adduced in proof of his addiction to the swilling habit of the time. At most they only show that Luther regularly took his glass with the rest, enjoyed it to the full, sometimes indulged in an extra glass with his associates, expressed his appreciation of it on various grounds, and in doing so allowed himself at times to lapse into his habit of jocose over-emphasis. Whether he would not have been wise to abstain more than he did is another question. For one who suffered from stone as well as nervous overstrain, the regular use of alcohol, even in such quantity as was regarded in the sixteenth century as moderate, was questionable from the hygienic point of view. Unfortunately the physicians did not know this any more than he himself, and even prescribed strong drink as a remedy for stone. In any case, it is certain that Luther neither approved nor condoned excessive drinking. On the contrary, in his writings as well as his "Table Talk," he consistently denounced this vice, and energetically called for its suppression. These passages occur not merely in his earlier works, such as the "Address to the Nobility." In his Commentary on Genesis and other later works, and in the "Table Talk" of the thirties and forties, he again and again complains of this national evil. Nor did he content himself with mere denunciation. He brought it to the notice of the Elector John Frederick, the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, and others, and urged them to take in hand the work of reform.[28]

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[19] Eph. iv. 29.

[20] "Corp. Ref.," vi. 158.

[21] See, for instance, his letters to his wife from Weimar and Eisenach, July 1540. Enders-Kawerau, xiii. 107, 113.

[22] See, for instance, his last letters to his wife, which contain expressions of his appreciation of the Count of Mansfeld's beer and wine. Enders-Kawerau, xvii. 16 f.

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[23] " T.R.," ii. 433-434.

[24] *Ibid.*, iv. 580.

[25] See Boehmer, 171-172; Köstlin, ii. 681-682. The couplet is first mentioned by Vos in the second half of the eighteenth century. He credited it to Luther, but could not give the source.

[26] Enders, x. 158.

[27] Boehmer, 171. Enders wrongly guessed Plenus.

As a writer as well as a conversationalist, Luther understood how to make himself interesting, and he was easily the most powerful publicist of his age. He beat Erasmus, in this capacity, in the volume of his output and in the sweep of his influence as a writer in the common tongue. He moved the masses as no other writer did, by the rare combination of impassioned conviction and supreme mastery over the common language, which he created as a vehicle of his convictions. To the modern reader he is often diffuse, and sometimes tiresome and unconvincing. Historical and theological knowledge has made a great advance since his time, and in the light of this accession of knowledge some of his reasonings fail to impress the mind of the modern student. But over his own age, to which the mighty controversy into which he plunged it was a living issue, he threw the spell of his message and his personality. Even when he is most outrageous he has always something to say, and is nearly always arresting. He is no mere froth-blower. He has his weaknesses as a writer, for he could not at times command the rush of his words as well as his thoughts. He knew ill how to be brief, sententious. *Sic sum*—"So I am made," he confessed to Melanchthon in excusing the amplitude of his vocabulary and his paragraphs, and his verbosity grew with the years.[29] He compared himself with his colleagues in this respect, and not quite to his own advantage. "Magister Philip (Melanchthon) is sparing of words, and treats his subject concisely and logically. Jonas, Pomeranus (Bugenhagen), and I indulge in many words, expatiate at large, and cannot concentrate in our writings. Agricola can be both concise and copious when he wishes."[30] "I hew the trees; Philip planes them."[31]

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[28] "T.R.," iii. 371; iv. 400, 579, 591-592.

He could only occasionally adopt the measured tone. "How I wish," wrote Melanchthon to Blaurer, "that this man could moderate the force and violence of his style."[32] But then those who would move the world profoundly must be extremists in the expression and maintenance of the truth that is in them, even if the truth may perforce be as one-sided as themselves. As the world was constituted in the sixteenth century, Luther could only gain a hearing by startling utterance and even, sometimes, studied exaggeration. He was what the Scots call "an original," or "a character," and could hardly help being what the French call an *enragé*, even at the risk of incurring the animadversion of the future critic. Like some other great writers he deals liberally in hyperbole, and when he takes up his pen or opens his mouth, in his excited moments he is apt to over-colour what he has to write or say. He thus often spoils a good idea by overstating it. In this mood he sees the devil or Antichrist in every opponent, even those on his own side, not to speak of those on the side of the Pope. He himself, like Knox, was conscious of his liability to criticism on this score, and though he resented the criticisms of Cochlaeus, Faber, and other unsympathetic faultfinders, he would certainly have subscribed to Knox's confession of a similar failing. "My rude vehemency and unconsidered affirmations, which may rather appear to proceed from choler than of zeal and reason, I do not excuse." He was ready, in his more reflective moods at least, like Augustine, to own his errors and inconsistencies. "I am not better than St Augustine, who took credit for being among the crowd of teachers who increase their knowledge in writing and teaching, and do not imagine, like these asses, Cochlaeus and Faber, that they have straightway got the right knowledge of St Paul, and can never improve or make a mistake." [33]

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[29] Enders, viii. 80 f., 204.

[30] Thiele, "Denkwürdigkeiten," 252; "Theol. Stud. und Krit.," 1907.

[31] "T.R.," iv. 637.

[32] Quoted by Von Schubert, "Z.K.G.," 1908, 324.

II. LUTHER AS PROPHET

It is difficult to measure the greatness of the work accomplished by Luther. He was a religious genius and an intellectual giant. He left his impress on the age, and moulded the history of the future as no other man had done in the sphere of religion and religious thought since Augustine and Paul. He was more than a reformer. Reformers of a kind had appeared in almost unbroken succession throughout the centuries preceding his, and he was born in an age very fruitful in reforming aims and tendencies. The second half of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth had witnessed successive attempts at reformation by individuals and by councils, and the Humanist movement, which supervened, continued these attempts into the sixteenth century. The reforming sects and fraternities, the reforming councils, Wiclif and Hus, Savonarola, Erasmus, Colet, Ximenes, and many more, worked at the problem right up to the day when Luther launched his theses on the world and entered on his active reforming career. They even anticipated some of his ideas and many of his demands, and in the mere enunciation of these he can hardly be called original. Many of his contentions are familiar, even commonplace to the student of the preceding ecclesiastical and religious records. He, in fact, entered into a rich inheritance of thought current in the schools or in the literature of the previous two centuries. He was, as we have seen, powerfully influenced by churchmen or scholars like Bernard, Occam, Valla, Gerson, Tauler, and many more, not to mention Augustine himself. Nevertheless he was something more than a reproduction of any one of his predecessors, or all of them. He was vastly more than a reformer, such as his own or preceding generations produced. He was a prophet with the message that the times were fitted and ready to receive. He derived this message, not from this or that predecessor, from this or that external source, but from his own wrestlings with the problem of sin and salvation, as this problem presented itself in his personal experience. He belongs, in this respect, to the same category as Paul or Augustine; to the creative, prophetic type of man in the sphere of religion, whose spiritual experience, in its peculiar power and insight, marks an epoch in religious history. It is this that elevates him as a religious teacher so far above his reforming predecessors and contemporaries, Calvin even not excepted, though Calvin possessed some gifts and qualities which were lacking in him. What this experience was, and what it involved, we already sufficiently know. What stamps him as the prophet is the fact that he made this experience the factor of a religious revolution. Out of this experience he gave to his age a characteristic conception of the Christian religion as something inward, spiritual, which profoundly modified the current ecclesiastical conception of it, and evolved in a great emancipation movement for the individual, the Church, and even the State. For the prophet was no mere visionary, no mere man of ideas. He was a powerful personality, who possessed the mental and moral qualities necessary to give effect to them. He could grip and move and mould the world in the direction of his message, in spite of its subjection to ideas and institutions which were invested with the prestige of centuries, and dominated the age. To this age the Papacy and the mediæval Church seemed as much a part of the divine economy as the order of nature itself. They entered into the very fibre of the life of the individual and the nation alike. It was another case of Athanasius *contra mundum.* When he began his active reforming career, Western, Central, and Southern Europe owned subjection to the Pope and the hierarchy, and to the complex system of religious thought and usage for which the Pope and the hierarchy stood. When he died, the greater part of Germany had renounced this subjection, with all that it involved for the individual and national life, and his influence was telling powerfully in many other lands in the same direction. A revolution of incalculable import had been accomplished, or was being accomplished, in a large part of Europe. True, the movement cannot be ascribed solely to his work as the prophet of a new religious movement. It was in the making before he appeared, and a complexity of forces contributed to its development. It is as true from this point of view to say that the Reformation made Luther, as that Luther made the Reformation. Like all great makers of history, he was fortunate in his age, and owed much to his age. The movement he inaugurated and propagated so rapidly would hardly have been possible without the printing press, for instance, which had become such a powerful force in influencing public opinion. It owed, too, not a little to the princes and magnates who espoused his cause and made it a potent political as well as religious force. But the age needed its prophet all the same, and in the sphere of religion the prophet appeared, in whose soul the prophetic vision was born, and through whose personality the prophetic inspiration took hold of the world. In virtue of his strength of conviction and his dominating will, he is the master spirit of the movement, bending the wills of others, and compelling, overawing them into compliance with his own. A word from him is sufficient to make history. In the earlier period especially he appears as the agent of a dynamic which he cannot control, and which he recognises as a supernatural inspiration. The secret of it seems to lie in the reality of his faith and the might of his prayers. In this respect he assuredly belongs to the school of the prophets. Luther's faith was of the rock-like order, which surmounted and bade defiance to the doubt that not infrequently assailed him, and to the devil who was constantly laying snares for him, and the devil's agents—the Pope, the bishops, Cochlaeus, Duke George of Saxony, Münzer, the Anabaptists, the Sacramentarians, etc.—the whole host of enemies in whom he saw the cloven hoof. Prayer, as well as the Word, is his unfailing refuge against the satanic agents who faced him on every hand. Mighty and insistent is his wrestling with God in his hours of trial, as when he prayed Melanchthon from the portals of death back to life at Weimar in 1540.[1]

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[33] "Werke," xxxviii. 134.

Both the prophet and his work have inevitably been subjected to keen criticism. To the adherents of the old order, pure and simple, to the votaries of an infallible Church and an absolute Pope, he is a prophet not of good, but of evil. They regard his message as a perversion of religion, his mission as a calamity, and himself not as a reformer, but as a deformer. They regard a Ximenes, a Hadrian VI., a Contarini, a Pole, and other reformers within the Church as the only legitimate reformers, and they are of opinion that Luther, in his uncompromising antagonism to the Pope and the hierarchy, and his emancipation of the individual, the Church, the State from the papal hierarchic domination, was a traitor to religion as well as to the Church. They forget that it was the antagonism of the Pope and the hierarchy that forced him into uncompromising antagonism to them. They forget that all attempts even at practical reform within the Church had for two centuries been failures, with the exception of such partial essays as that of Ximenes in Spain. Savonarola, Mirandola, Hadrian VI., Erasmus, Lefèbre, and Colet were but voices crying in the wilderness as far as the reformation of the rampant evils they denounced was concerned. The Papacy, if not the hierarchy, had regarded such attempts with disfavour or scant recognition, and reforming popes of the type of Hadrian VI. only proved by their efforts to deal with abuses their impotence as reformers. They forget, moreover, that it was really due to the inspiration of the Lutheran Reformation that reform within the Church at last became a possibility. For Luther's work, even supposing it to be the unmitigated evil they hold it to be, the Church itself was largely responsible, and to it in the long run it largely owed its regeneration. It was honeycombed with abuses, and it represented such a travesty of primitive Christianity that the conviction that an adequate reform must take the form of a revolution had been felt by many besides Luther, though only Luther had the genius and the resource to be the prophet and leader of this revolution. If Luther did nothing else, he at least shook the whole of Western Christendom out of its spiritual torpor. He ultimately compelled even the degenerate Roman Curia to face in earnest the problem of at least a counter-Reformation. Indirectly, in fact, he became the reformer of the Roman Catholic Church.

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[1] "T.R.," v. 129, 245; vi. 163; *cf.* Enders-Kawerau, xiii. 111.

But was this revolution in itself an evil? Was it not rather a necessary and salutary reconstruction of Christianity by the destruction of what was a deformation of it, as tested by the surest standard—viz., the teaching of the New Testament? For what was mediæval Christianity? It was, if you like, a development of the religion of the New Testament in accordance with the historic influences to which religions and institutions are equally subject. From being a simple democracy of believers, the Church had grown into a secularised ecclesiastical autocracy, under the headship of the Pope, which served indeed a historic purpose in civilising the barbarian peoples that came under its sway, and in countering, on occasion, and bringing to bear the principles of Christian morality on the rampant lawlessness of feudal Society. It achieved a great work in fostering architecture and art, in developing the higher education in its scholastic form, in inspiring devotion to the religious ideal of the time, in mitigating by its philanthropy the hard lot of the masses. But in the process of this ecclesiastical development, it swerved far from the primitive gospel and from the primitive institutions, and absorbed many of the features of the kingdoms of this world, which contrasted strangely with the kingdom of God, founded by Jesus and organised by His followers. It developed an elaborate doctrinal system by infusing into the teaching of Jesus the conceptions of antique and mediæval thought. It exercised in the service of this system a tyranny over the mind and the conscience, and strove to maintain it by means of the secular power. It had grafted the polytheism of the ancient world on Christian monotheism by substituting the saints for the old gods in the superstitious reverence of the people. It invented doctrines like those of transubstantiation and purgatory to buttress the power of the priesthood. It strove to extend its dominion over the whole realm of human life by encroaching on the sphere of the State and disputing its independence in this sphere. It elaborated a vast system of ecclesiastical law and a complex system of ecclesiastical usages, for which it claimed divine sanction and to which it exacted a rigorous obedience. It wielded the terrible weapon of the greater excommunication in defence of its decisions, its rights, its claims, its privileges. It claimed infallibility and regarded dissent as the worst of heresies. It became a vast financial organisation with enormous material wealth, and exercised the right to tax and tithe for the support of a priesthood which grew corrupt, oppressive, and scandalously inefficient.

This was the form of Christianity which a humble monk and professor, with no resources but his Bible and his own fervid genius, challenged and overthrew. Its overthrow was in very truth a revolution, and whether we approve or condemn it, we cannot ignore its magnitude in the light of its effects both in Luther's own time and prospectively in the course of modern history. What he accomplished even in the thirty years of his active career, in transforming the doctrine, constitution, and usages of the Western Church within a large part of Central and Northern Europe, was indeed phenomenal. The transformation in the sphere of doctrine is sufficiently obvious when we compare his works and the Confession of Augsburg with the creed of Trent. In the sphere of theological thought such doctrines as the total impotence of the will, the consequent nullity of human merit in the attainment of salvation, the justification of the soul by faith alone, the assurance of the forgiveness of sin as the fruit of fiducial faith, the sole supremacy of the Scriptures as the norm of faith and authority, the denial of transubstantiation, and the sacrificial character of the mass, the democratic conception of the Church as the community of all believers, and the liberty of the Christian man—mark a revolutionary divergence from the dogmas of the mediæval Church. These doctrines, as propounded by Luther, ran counter to the doctrinal development of the Middle Ages, which he denounced as an unwarrantable deviation from apostolic and patristic Christianity. He left, indeed, a certain scope for development within the Church as long as it remains true to Scripture. But if this development admits doctrines and practices not warranted by Scripture, it is inadmissible, and in any case the later doctors of the Church have no right to impose their beliefs on the individual as articles of faith. Like Wiclif and Hus before him, he held that it is not heresy to bring back the Church to evangelical purity, and that his opponents, not he, had departed from true Christianity. For him the Roman Church was a sect—yea, a heretical sect. It arrogates to itself the title of Catholic, and denies this title to all other Churches within the universal body of Christians. It thus makes of the part the whole, and this is essentially sectarian. Moreover, it has invented and foisted on the Church errors and practices alien from the teaching of Christ and the Apostles. It is, therefore, heretical.

In the sphere of ecclesiastical polity he overthrew the papal-hierarchical power and set up the independent national or territorial Church. He substituted a new conception and a new type of the religious life, based on the principle of the right of the individual soul in relation to God, for those of the Middle Ages. In virtue of this principle, he launched an emancipation movement of far-reaching range—far bigger, in fact, than he could divine or understand, and one which his conservative instinct ultimately sought to circumscribe. The greatness of the revolution he initiated lies, in fact, as much in what it involved as in what it actually achieved under his personal auspices.

On the other hand, no critical historian can hold, as the extreme Lutherans[2] are apt to do, that in his direction of the Reformation he was always right. It is, indeed, only too evident that sometimes his direction was wrong. It is, of course, too much to ask of even the prophet that he shall understand the whole significance of the movement he initiates, or see the full scope of the truths he enunciates. He could not realise his limitations or his mistakes, as we realise them, for he was a man of his time and was not independent of his environment. Heredity, education, temperament, the spirit of the age inevitably influenced and circumscribed his mental vision. His was not a systematic mind that creates a logical harmony of thought and action. Had he possessed the gift of systematic thought, he would not have been the prophet he was. He thought and worked as the spirit moved him, and gave utterance to the rush of his ideas as the occasion and the subject demanded. He hardly ever took time to revise and amend what he wrote. Many of his works were penned to meet an emergency in the ceaseless conflict in which he was absorbed, and were usually being printed whilst he wrote. He was, moreover, too fertile in ideas to concern himself with the mere question of their relation, or even their consistency; too often appears self-contradictory, as most of us are at some time or another in the course of our lives. Genius like his can only operate in its own way and after its kind, and must be allowed the privileges of its peculiarities. Its peculiarities, however, may also be its weaknesses; and Luther, as prophet as well as man, has his weaknesses. He opposed the dogmatism of the Roman Catholic Church, and yet he was himself the most insistent of dogmatists. He retained in his thought a not inconsiderable element of the scholastic theology, and uncritically identified the ancient creeds with the teaching of the New Testament, as the infallible criteria of right and obligatory belief.[3] He attacked scholasticism, and yet he ultimately gave an impulse to the tendency that eventuated, under the auspices of his less original and far smaller-minded followers, in Protestant scholasticism. He pleaded at Worms on behalf of toleration in the name of Scripture, reason, and conscience, and nevertheless ultimately resorted to the mediæval principle of the coercion of mind and conscience within the narrow mould of an evangelical orthodoxy, and would admit of no deviation from his own dogmatic convictions, even in the realm of metaphysical theology.[4] It may be said that, the age being intolerant, he was only acting under the influence of the time. This is more an explanation than an excuse, in view of the fact that, in the assertion of his own ideas, and especially in the advocacy of the right of individual judgment, he broke radically with mediæval intolerance. In relapsing into this intolerance he was sinning against the light that had been in him. He became too small for the large movement which he initiated, as his "Spiritual" opponents reminded him, and he failed to appreciate or apply the logic of his own principles. In this respect he was incapable of living up to his own idealism—the supreme test of the highest type of personality. He would ultimately grant no toleration to Papists, Sacramentarians, Anabaptists, and Rationalists when he was in a position to dictate as well as direct. He would have been struck with horror at the extension of his own principle of private judgment, as the modern spirit has extended it, though it was implicitly involved, and, in his earlier period, generously expressed in his own teaching, and modern critical theological thought is the legitimate development of what he thus taught. He refused to hold fellowship with Zwingli, because he declined, in accordance with this principle, to accept his theory of the Eucharist as the scriptural one. He went asunder from Erasmus because he would not admit the utter bondage of the will, and held Copernicus in contempt because he denied that the sun goes round the earth. He denounced the papists as murderers because they burned Lutherans, and yet he was ready, ultimately, to send the Anabaptists to execution because they persisted in understanding the Gospel differently from him. He preached the Gospel of freedom and, nevertheless, inculcated a doctrine of subjection to political tyranny, as exercised in the service of his own religious convictions. Whilst in the maintenance of his own religious convictions he was the steadfast champion of individualism, he was too ready to subordinate and even sacrifice the individual when his own dogmatic convictions were concerned. His conception of liberty was circumscribed by his innate conservatism in the political as well as the religious sphere. This precluded him from anticipating the larger views that have taken practical shape in the rejection of the absolute divine right of the ruler and of the inequality and oppression of the feudal social system; in the assertion of the rights of the individual in the political as well as the religious sphere, and the striving for the social betterment of the masses with which it has been associated, in spite of the individual and class selfishness, which, in his own way and within his own limited purview, he nevertheless unsparingly denounced. He arraigned in the most scathing and revolutionary terms rampant ecclesiastical abuses, and yet incited the extermination of the peasants, who applied his revolutionary teaching to the extirpation of social abuses. He had a certain sympathy with humanism, made fertile use of its principle *ad fontes*—back to the sources—recognised the natural knowledge of God through reason,[5] realised the value of education and, like John Knox, strove, with Melanchthon's aid, to plant a school in every parish and a high school in every considerable centre of population. In his contest with Carlstadt and the prophets he was, to a certain extent, defending the cause of culture against its ill-balanced and visionary opponents. Yet he jealously separated the religious from the culture movement, and ultimately adopted an attitude of unbending hostility to the critical spirit in the quest for truth, and took refuge in the Occamist antithesis between faith and reason. The blame for this unfortunate disruption between the two movements does not, indeed, lie all on his side. Whilst the more conservative humanists failed to appreciate the distinctive religious advance made by Luther, the irreligious spirit of the more sceptical wing of the movement could only repel a man of his profound religious conviction. At the same time, his habitual depreciation of reason, his tendency to irrational judgments could not but provoke the antagonism of both sections and make co-operation with him impossible.

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[2] For instance, Asmussen and Merz in "Zwischen den Zeiten," Heft 5 (1928).

[3] "Werke," l. 262 f. Tractate on the three ancient Creeds—the Apostles', the Athanasian, and the Te Deum Laudamus—erroneously ascribed to Ambrose and Augustine by mediæval legend.

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[4] For a detailed survey of his attitude to religious liberty, see Bainton, *Harvard Theological Review*, April 1929. Rather one-sided.

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[5] See Otto, "The Idea of the Holy," 141 f., who points out that he was not consistent in this recognition.

This is the reverse side of the prophet, and his Romanist critics are entitled, if they please, to make the most of it in their attempt to discredit his message and his work, though in doing so they are really condemning their own principles. Yet, when all is granted, the fact remains that he did a mighty work for the emancipation and progress of the human spirit. For the Reformation, with its principles and tendencies, good and bad, the world is indebted largely to him. His work, with all its limitations, was a mighty impulse forward. Not even Luther could be more than he was. That he *was*, is the greatest fact of the sixteenth century.

III. LUTHER AS EVANGELICAL MORALIST

The key to Luther's work as a religious reformer lies in his religious experience. His main interest was the practical religious life rather than the science of theology, though he gave a highly distinctive and a far-reaching contribution to theological thought in reasoning out and defending his religious convictions. The grand religious problem is for him, as for Paul and Augustine, the soteriological one. The cardinal question is how to save the soul from sin and its effects. The problem is both religious and ethical. It is a total misunderstanding of it to say that he leaves out the ethical aspect of it, and that all that he is concerned with is merely to escape hell and get to heaven by means of a purely external and artificial scheme of vicarious merits, appropriated by faith, apart from the ethical aspect of the problem or the process. Like Paul, he strove to make the principle of justification by faith the lever of the practical religious life. As in Paul, the individual Christian is under obligation to practise self-discipline and show forth the indwelling Christ in the mortification of the flesh and in service for others, in all the relations of ordinary life. To do so he needs not betake himself to the cloister and submit to the mechanical regulation of the monastic life. To do this is to relapse into the mistaken work-righteousness of the old Phariseeism, from which Paul delivered himself and the Church in vindication of Christian liberty, the true life of faith. As in the New Testament, both the individual and the community are distinguished not merely by their faith from the evil world. They are a leaven, an ethical force in the midst of this evil world, striving to realise in themselves and in it the kingdom of God. The distinctive mark of the justified believer and the association of believers alike is the indwelling of Christ and the Spirit acting through the Word, reproducing and perpetuating in both, in mystic devotion and active service, the eternal Christ. This they do, not under the yoke of the law, of legality, but in voluntary devotion to the good for its own sake and in joyous response to a dynamic faith. It is the religious and moral, not the legal factor that actuates the Christian life. This is an essential of the Lutheran principle of justification by faith, in which, like Paul, he found the formula of his religious experience. It is patent both in his writings and in his personal piety.

It found mature expression in the Commentary on Galatians, for instance, which appeared in 1535, and comprises his lectures on Galatians in 1531, taken down by Rörer as he delivered them.[1] Galatians came to be his favourite among all the New Testament writings—"his own epistle," he called it, "the one to which he was betrothed, his Catherine von Bora,"[2] and as the fruit of his mature study of it, he was no longer satisfied with the commentary of 1519, and the revision of it in 1523.[3] It contains numerous passages,[4] in which the ethical aspect of justification is elaborated. "After you are justified and believe in Christ," he comments on ii. 18, "then, being possessed by the Holy Spirit, you do works accordingly. The Holy Spirit does not keep holiday; it is not slothful, but will bear the cross and exercise works in all."[5] "Dead to the law;[6] alive unto God," is for Luther, as for Paul, the grand paradox of the life of faith[7] (ii. 18-19). Faith liberates from sin and death, and this liberty is the death of the law. "You have sinned. True. You will be damned, says the law. No matter. I have another law which compels the law to silence. What is this? The law of liberty. How? Because I am freed through Christ. The law remains only for them who do not believe in Christ."[8] This liberty is not merely immunity from condemnation, deliverance from the death penalty of the law, though this is also strongly emphasised.[9] Living with God means Christ living in me in the ethical as well as the more forensic sense. Whilst living in the flesh, the believer does not live according to the flesh. There is an organic union between Christ and the Christian. "Paul so lives in Christ that with Him he works, speaks, performs all his actions." "Thus death to the law begets a different, a new life—the life of Christ, which is not born in my person, but given through Christ in faith."[10] "The old inhabitant, Moses (the law), must give place to another, and depart when the new guest, Christ, comes into the new house, so that He alone may dwell in it."[11]

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[1] It forms Parts I. and II. of vol. xl. of the Weimar edition of his works, edited by Drescher (1911). See also Schulze, "Theol. Stud. und Krit.," 1926, 18 f.

[2] "T.R.," ii. 281 (July 1531).

[3] "Werke," ii. 453 f.

[4] For passages from his other works bearing on the subject, see Mensching, "Glaube und Werk bei Luther" (1926).

This mystic spiritual life may be an enigma, coming, like the wind, whence we know not. But it is unmistakably there in the human life of the believer. "Then the flesh being extinct, Christ reigns in the heart with His Holy Spirit, who now sees, hears, speaks, suffers, and does all things in me."[12] This is the distinctive practical mysticism of Luther, as of Paul, in which he has steeped himself and which he sharply differentiates from what he deems the false variety of it represented by Münzer, Carlstadt, the Anabaptists, and other fanatics (*Schwärmer*), whom the devil has bewitched, as he did the Galatians.[13] To put on Christ (iii. 27) is not merely to imitate Him, but to exude the old man with all its acts—to be reborn with a renewed will, new desires, a new light in the soul, and a new flame in the heart.[14] "In receiving the Spirit through the Word into the heart, the believer is a new and different being, in whom a new judgment, new senses, new affections arise. This change is not the work of human reason or virtue, but the gift and effect of the Holy Spirit, who comes with the preaching of the Word, purifies the heart by faith, and begets spiritual affections in it."[15] "In the true preaching of the Word the Spirit is present, and impresses the Word on the heart, so that every pious preacher is a parent who, by the ministry of the Word, generates and forms Christ in us through trust in Him."[16] "For we live in Christ, in whom and through whom we are kings and lords over sin, death, the flesh, the world, hell, and all evils."[17]

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[5] "Werke," xl., Pt. I., 265.

[6] Not merely the ceremonial law, but the law in the ethical sense as far as it reveals sin and death.

[7] "Werke," xl., Pt. I., 268.

[8] *Ibid.*, xl., Pt. I., 275-276.

[9] Asmussen stresses the forensic character of Luther's doctrine of justification as against Holl, who emphasises the ethical as the main feature of it. "Die Rechtfertigung als Befreiung vom Gesetz," "Zwischen den Zeiten," Heft 5, 387 f. (1928).

[10] "Werke," xl., Pt. I., 287-288 (on ii. 20).

[11] *Ibid.*, xl., Pt. I., 262 (ii. 18).

He recognises with the Apostle the danger that lurks in the doctrine of justification by faith, or rather the abuse of it, and the need of guarding against the use of liberty as an occasion of the flesh. He deplores the fact that the Gospel has taken so little real hold of men. He falls foul not only of the visionaries who have perverted it. Noblemen, burghers, peasants, servants, are all too disposed thus to transform liberty into licence. Such are only sham believers and no real Christians, and unfortunately they compose the majority, who live sensual, selfish lives and have lost Christ. The blame does not lie with him, but with those who abuse the pure doctrine, and he seeks his consolation in the minority of true Christians, who realise that true liberty consists in crucifying the flesh and serving each other in mutual love, which is the fulfilling of the whole law in the ethical, Christian sense.[18] True doctrine demands true works. The whole thing is comprehended in the sentence, Believe in Christ, and love your neighbour, whether friend or enemy.[19]

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[12] "Werke," xl., Pt. I., 290.

[13] *Ibid.*, xl., Pt. I., 316 f. On the mystic element in Luther, see Holl, "Luther und die Schwärmer," "Gesammelte Aufsätze" (1923); see also Bornkamm "Mystik, Spiritualismus, und die Anfänge des Pietismus im Lutherthum" (1926).

[14] "Werke," xl., Pt. I., 540.

[15] *Ibid.*, xl., Pt. I., 572 (iv. 6).

[16] *Ibid.*, xl., Pt. I., 649 (iv. 19).

[17] *Ibid.*, xl., Pt. I. (iv. 29).

He emphatically repudiates the Antinomian version of his doctrine, which the Romanists lay to his charge. Christ, he tells them, did not die for adulterers, whoremongers, usurers, etc., who do not, after the forgiveness of their sins, renounce sin and lead a new life. His redeeming death has no validity in such cases. "For Christ has not merely merited grace for us, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that we obtain not only forgiveness of sin, but come under the obligation to abstain from sin." [20] Nor does he conceal the retributive aspect of the divine justice in the treatment of sin and the sinner. God is inexorable in His attitude towards wilful sin, and no one can enter into a filial relation to Him unless he renounces sin.[21]

The ethical side of the life of faith finds concrete expression in his personal piety. His striving is not only to make known, but to live the Gospel, as Paul taught and lived it. As with Paul, Christ is his obsession. Faith in Him is the inspiration of all his striving and achievement. It is not faith in the intellectual sense, but in the sense of absolute trust, confidence in God in Christ (*Trauen*, *Vertrauen*, *Fiducia*). This personal faith is the secret of the movement he started and carried to fruition in the face of tremendous odds. It is the grand antidote to the doctrine of the impotence of the will, the nullity in God's sight of his own efforts for salvation. It was his faith that, despite this pessimistic and quietist doctrine, saved him from being a pessimist and a quietist, and made him the religious and ethical force he was. His faith is dynamic, charismatic, not static. Word and sacrament are the media of God's grace, but only in personal, active relation to the individual soul, which they vitalise, energise with a new life. They nurture, indeed, a keen sense of sin, a sensitive conscience in the face of God's absolute righteousness, and this sense of sin, this sensitive conscience leads him to judge unsparingly himself as well as others. It is not only sin in the grosser, but sin in the spiritual sense, sins of the spirit as well as of the flesh. The Cross ever stands in the centre of Luther's piety, both as a guarantee of the forgiveness of sins, and as a signpost of the obligation of suffering. But this sense of sin, this suffering is no longer, as in his monastic period, a self-centred obsession, threatening to blight the soul with a despairing pessimism. It has been banished, replaced by a fiducial faith, which has reconciled the antithesis between God's righteousness and man's sin, and begotten the consciousness of the Christian life as a joyous service, in filial relation to God, and as a growing assimilation of the living, indwelling Christ, as in the Pauline mysticism.[22] In this respect his piety differs *in toto* from the conventional ecclesiastical type —the doing of works of penance, or goodness, with a view to their meritorious effects, their soteriological value. This is for him a torture and enslavement of the conscience, from which his fiducial faith has delivered him. His trust in God involves distrust of self and all its works, and a breach with the mediæval formalism and the superstitious devotion, which have grown out of the misapprehension and the perversion of the doctrine of justification by faith. This doctrine, which has simplified and spiritualised religion, has rendered superfluous, nay, positively dangerous, all the religiosity which centres around the confessional and the cloister. He rejects almost the whole paraphernalia of mediæval piety as prescribed and regulated by the mediæval

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[18] "Werke," xl., Pt. II., 59 f. (v. 13-14).

[19] *Ibid.*, xl. Pt. II., 67, 70, 73.

[20] *Ibid.*, l. 580.

[21] See the relative passages from his works in Otto, "The Idea of the Holy," 102 f.

[22] Preuss ("Luther's Frömmigkeit," 1917) overlooks this aspect of Luther's piety, which is steeped in the mysticism of Paul, whilst relating it to that of the mediæval mystics.

Church, and practised in a materialist, superstitious spirit, though he is inclined to retain what is good and serviceable in mediæval devotion—so much so, that his more radical opponents regarded him as a reactionary and a traitor to his own principle. For this formalism he substituted the piety of common life, and, in so doing, extended its range over the whole complex of life and nature. Christ has lived the whole human life, consecrated it to God, shared its common joys and duties and sorrows,[23] and Luther follows Him whole-heartedly in giving scope to the human element in his piety, and cultivating, whilst seeking to purify, the social virtues. Moreover, God was not only immanent in Christ, redeeming sinners and consecrating the human life. He is present in and behind nature, providing for the wants of man and beast in all His wondrous gifts of creation and providence. His attitude to life is that of a believing Christian, to whom God is the great reality in all that is and befalls. Nature is the great mirror reflecting God's omnipresence and goodness—a revelation second only to the Word—and its beauty, its wondrous forces ever speak to him of God. He emancipates nature from the evil spell of the monastic conception, and would deliver it also from the power of the Papacy. He replaces its pessimism by an optimism that sees God everywhere, and rejoices in a smiling landscape, with its cornfields, orchards, vineyards, as a manifesto of a beneficent, divine presence. This expansive optimism is the keynote of Luther's piety at its best, lending a power to the will and a spring to the heart, such as, in dependence on and trust in God, rings out in his spiritual battle hymns, "Nun freut euch lieben Christen gemein" and "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott," challenging, triumphing over a world of enemies, taking God at His Word and daring all for Him and His righteousness, possessing all things in Christ, supreme over sin and death.

At the same time, it is not mere religious emotionalism, for the emotions are controlled by a strong moral sense and a rationality which recoil from the visionary and ill-regulated mysticism of "the Prophets." It is, too, conditioned by the Word of God, sanely interpreted and applied with a robust common sense, which sets a limit to what he deems an unwarrantable subjectivism. There is, indeed, a strong strain of subjectivity in his own type of piety. Whilst he holds firmly to an objective revelation as contained in Scripture, it is only as the individual, under the guidance of the Spirit, apprehends and appropriates this revelation that it becomes vitally operative. Each must apprehend Christ for himself, though, in reality, this means apprehending Him as Luther does, and leaves no room, in things essential, for the individual apprehension of others. His piety is, too, very naïve at times. He conceives of God as a sort of grandfatherly personality whose will and ways he knows to a nicety, and who always sides with him against his opponents, whether papal or Protestant. God has revealed His will, and it is for Dr Luther, as the exponent of the divine will, to say the last word in every controversy. His knowledge of the devil and his tricks is equally intimate, and, next to God in Christ, the devil plays the chief rôle in his religious experience. He has no appreciation of the more rational type of piety represented by Erasmus. The naïvety of his faith in this respect narrows and lends at times an obscurantist touch to his religious judgments. His piety is that of the heart rather than the intellect, in spite of the fact that he is the most powerful of dialecticians. He naïvely shares the apocalyptic conception of a world ripe for judgment and nearing its end, and this note of the later mediæval age becomes especially prominent in his later years, when ill-health and disappointment leave their deep furrow in his sanguine temperament. Even so, the note of a triumphant faith, an assured trust in God, shoot their bright rays across this clouded sky. As in the case of the Hebrew prophet, the glow, the heroism of his piety, light up the falling night of the divine judgment.

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[23] See, for instance, the classic passage, "Werke," xxxvii. 59 f.

Luther's principle of justification, as he himself interpreted and strove to realise it in the ideal Christian life (though, of course, imperfectly), is thus not unethical, as has often been maintained. " Influenced by the common, popular way of looking at God," says M'Giffert, for instance, " he conceived Him so exclusively under the aspect of an angry judge that the one thing needful seemed escape from the divine wrath. His sin troubled him, not on its own account, but solely on account of the wrath of God which it entailed. It was not an ethical motive which controlled him: not to attain moral purity, but to be on good terms with God was the supreme need of his being."[24] This is a one-sided and misleading statement. Luther, indeed, often enough stresses this aspect of the subject. Sin and an angry God are grim realities for the soul seeking in vain by its own efforts to surmount them and attain the assurance of eternal life. But this is not the only aspect of the problem of salvation. What chiefly contributed to the poignancy of the sense of sin, as we have seen in our study of Luther's early religious development,[25] was not the mere fear of hell or the thought of an angry God, but the overpowering conception of the absolute divine righteousness, on the one hand; on the other, the worthlessness, the utter shortcoming of his own righteousness, as measured by this standard. Equally questionable is the statement that "Paul was moved primarily by moral considerations, as Luther was not. For Paul the one dreadful thing was the corruption of the flesh, to which the natural man is subject. To be freed from it by the agency of divine power—this and this alone meant salvation."[26] Not divine forgiveness, as in the case of Luther, but moral transformation was, it seems, the ground of his salvation. It would be truer to say that both are the ground of salvation, since forgiveness is an indispensable condition of this moral transformation. Practically there is no real difference between Paul and Luther in this respect. For both, redemption involves the real, not merely the formal, attainment of righteousness—the Christ possession of the believer. Luther equally with Paul, whom he follows, laid stress on " the indwelling of the Spirit in the Christian." The selfless life is his ideal, and to this ideal, as far as seeking his own advantage was concerned, he was true as steel. Nothing for self, all for God, would best serve as his motto.

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[24] "Protestant Thought Before Kant," 24 (1919). Vedder, another recent American writer, is also guilty of misleading statements on this subject: "Luther offered a theological reform, not an ethical." "The Reformation in Germany," 391 (1914). This judgment is not surprising, seeing that he quotes as his authorities Döllinger and Denifle, both Roman Catholics. As against such misleading judgments, see, for instance, Holl's essays on "Der Neubau der Sittlichkeit" and "Die Kultur Bedeutung der Reformation," "Aufsätze" (1927); and Stange's essays on "Religion und Sittlichkeit bei den Reformatoren" and "Luther und das sittliche Ideal, Studien zu Luther's Theologie" (1928). See also H. M. Müller, "Erfahrung und Glaube bei Luther," 142 f. (1929).

[25] "Luther and the Reformation," i.

[26] "Protestant Thought Before Kant," 25. For a discussion of the question of the identity of Paul's and Luther's doctrine of justification, see Moe in "Das Erbe Martin Luthers," 310 f., ed. by Jelke in honour of Ihmels (1928). The conclusion is in the affirmative.

At the same time, the principle of justification by faith as a moral force did not operate, in either case, the ideal results, in the practical sphere, which, if rightly applied, it was both fitted and intended to produce. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians and the Epistle of James reveal plainly enough that, in the early Church, principle did not necessarily square with practice. Similarly, there are many passages in Luther's writings admitting and deploring the all too widespread discrepancy between creed and practice in the lives of all classes of the community. " The great mass remains as it is, and grows daily worse."[27] We must, of course, discount something for the ingrained tendency to over-emphasis—exaggeration. Luther is too apt to follow the old bad habit which saw moral obliquity in difference of theological opinion. Often enough all his opponents are devils, or under the devil's influence, not really because they lead wicked lives, but simply because they differ from him on certain points of theology. In reality these " devils " might be good Christian people, who sought, in all sincerity, to live the Gospel in accordance with their own interpretation of it. Even so, it is equally evident that there was no far-reaching revolution of the moral life as the result of the preaching of the Gospel of justification by faith alone. There was, indeed, no lowering of the moral standard on the part of Luther himself or the evangelical preachers of the better stamp. On the contrary, Luther's popular sermons are a trumpet-call to the life of Christian goodness and service, as well as Christian freedom, under the inspiration of this evangelical faith; to the individual struggle against the devil, the world, and the flesh. To a considerable extent, too, the ethical implications of the doctrine were taken seriously in the practical effort to live the life of the Gospel. The martyrs who gave their lives for their faith afford incontestable evidence of the fact. Moreover, the doctrine did ultimately tend to beget an ethical type of piety, as Luther himself intended it to do, and persistently strove to this end. In more settled times the Lutheran Church did contribute to the moral education and elevation of the people. In Germany, as in other lands which came under the influence of the Reformation, the influence of evangelical piety in the building up of Christian character, the enriching of individual and family life with the Christian virtues, has done much to invalidate the objection to the doctrine on practical grounds. The relative failure of the Reformation as a moral force does not lie in the doctrine itself or the preaching of it. It lies rather in the difficulty of the task of raising ordinary human nature to the level of the Christian ideal, which has only too sadly handicapped the Christian idealist in his efforts to achieve the moral regeneration of the individual and society, from the time of Jesus Himself to the present day. It is much easier to change one's beliefs than to change one's habits, to construct a new Church than create a new society. In the early sixteenth century the Christian idealist had to reckon with the widespread demoralisation of the time as the result of the corruption rampant in a secularised Church, its failure to reform itself, and the evil influence of its moral decrepitude on the State and society. To expect a sudden and radical moral transformation in the face of this state of things was to expect the impossible. At best, the moral transformation could only be very imperfect.[28] Unfortunately, too, the bitter persecution of the Anabaptist sectaries swept away thousands of the adherents of the Reformation, who, apart from the extremist element, sincerely strove to live the life of the Gospel in their own individualistic fashion. This was a fatal loss to the movement from the moral point of view, and in co-operating in their destruction, from mistaken theological motives, Luther and his fellow-reformers had their own share of the responsibility for this loss, along with their own Romanist opponents. On the other hand, too many of the princes and the nobles, who espoused his cause, were more concerned with the political and material advantage to be got out of the Reformation than with the moral side of the movement. Moreover, the incessant rage of theological controversy between the adherents of the old and the new tended to obscure the supreme importance of life over dogma, and this bad effect was intensified by the quarrels of the reformers among themselves. Further, the brutal repression of the movement in behalf of social emancipation tended to react unfavourably on the purely religious movement, and for this aggravation of the prevailing demoralisation Luther had also his own share of responsibility. His violent intervention did not tend to add to the efficacy of his religious message among the disillusioned and despairing masses. It bred a chilling scepticism and pessimism among the common people. The shock to the faith of the common man paralysed the moral sense and chilled the aspiration after higher things. " Why preaches the parson of God ? " queried the hopeless peasant. " Who knows what God is, or whether there be a God ? "[29]

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[27] " Werke," l. 518.

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[28] How difficult the task, we can form some idea from the description of sixteenth-century society in Barth. Sastrow's "Memoirs," translated by Vandam, with introduction by H. A. L. Fisher, under the title of "Social Germany in Luther's Time" (1902).

Apart from the prevailing moral demoralisation, the presuppositions of the doctrine of justification, on which Luther laid such stress, were of questionable import from the moral point of view. Its presuppositions were the doctrines of original sin and its blasting effects in invalidating and nullifying the efforts of the will to the good. In this conception he followed Augustine rather than Paul, whose doctrine of original sin he, like him, misinterpreted. According to this view, all sinned in Adam and are, on this account, and not merely on account of their own sin, utterly depraved and under condemnation. This mistaken assumption undoubtedly tended to weaken the sense of individual responsibility for sin, whilst the conception of the utter corruption and moral impotence of human nature arising out of it, which he stressed in extreme, exaggerated terms, ignores too much the fact of man's moral personality and the moral endowment of human nature, which distinguishes it from the lower animals. It hangs like a dark cloud over Luther's theology and his personal piety alike. Not only did this extreme assumption grate on the moral sense of men like Erasmus and tend to alienate them from the evangelical movement; it tended to lower the moral tone in ordinary human nature, to weaken the moral fibre of the individual, and was thus responsible, to a certain extent, for the moral slackness which he deplored. He did his best, indeed, to obviate these shortcomings by insistently inculcating the moral aspect of justification and striving to make faith a tonic of the higher life. He did so in his popular sermons as well as his theological treatises, so that the ordinary man could understand his teaching. At the same time, the constant emphasis on faith versus works, on the total corruption of the heart and the utter impotence of the will in the religious and moral sense, apart from faith, tended to make morality too much a thing of theological belief instead of a fundamental fact of human personality. What this meant in practice in too many cases, he himself was destined to discover and deplore, whilst unconscious of the fact that his own extreme doctrine of original sin and its effects might have something to do with it.

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[29] Mackinnon, " History of Modern Liberty," ii. 101.

Moreover, it never occurred to him to ask whether a doctrine, based on the belief in the fall of Adam from a state of perfect innocence into a state of moral depravity, was really in accord with the facts of man's primeval condition, which modern scientific investigation has brought to light. He, as well as his theological opponents, was a convinced believer in the traditional theological interpretation of human origins, and would doubtless have regarded the modern scientific interpretation as one more of the devil's lying inventions.[30] None the less, in as far as the doctrine of justification was based on, and influenced by, this assumption, it does lose something of its appeal for the modern thinker. Nor did he realise the difficulty of relating this doctrine to the moral teaching and optimistic spirit of Jesus Himself.[31] For him this problem also did not exist, because he did not sufficiently apply, and, indeed, could hardly be expected to apply, the modern critical-historic method to the study of the New Testament. For him the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation is, in fact, a reflex of this doctrine as he conceived it. He is supremely unconscious of the fact that religious knowledge and experience vary with the age and the individual apprehension of God. Had he read his Bible with the open and inquiring, as well as the devout, mind, he would have learned the fact from the sacred page itself.

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[30] There are still ardent Lutherans who champion Luther's teaching

As a moralist, Luther strove to apply the ethical teaching of the Gospel in the economic sphere. In 1539 he raised his voice, in sermon and pamphlet, against the usurers or profiteers who speculated in corn, and, by keeping back supplies, artificially raised the price and starved the people. He urged the Elector to intervene and put a stop to the selfish tactics of these speculators.[32] He thundered from the pulpit against them,[33] and in a pamphlet on the subject urged his fellow-preachers to do likewise.[34] In this philippic he maintains and enforces his former contention, that the taking of interest above a certain rate and the selling of goods above a reasonable price are extortion and robbery. The Christian preacher may not allow himself to be misled by the pretext that such is the way of the world and that it is no good trying to oppose or change it. He is not to regard what the world does, but to stand up for the right. Let justice be done, even if the world perish, must ever be the motto of the

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on original sin. Asmussen is a convinced, though not convincing, representative of this school. See "Zwischen den Zeiten," 395 f.

[31] Holl, in his essay on "Die Rechtfertigungslehre des Protestantismus," 15-16, does not quite face the problem in asserting the identity of the teaching of Jesus and Paul on this subject, as Luther did.

[32] Enders, xii. 127-128 (9th April 1539).

[33] "Tischreden," i. 274 (ed. Förstemann).

[34] An die Pfarrherrn Wider den Wucher zu predigen, "Werke," li. 331 f.

Christian preacher. For Luther, morality is more imperative than the laws of political economy. His principle is " service above self," and this principle the preacher must proclaim in accordance with God's Word and absolute justice. To take advantage of the necessity of our neighbour to make money, and claim that we are rendering him a service in so doing, is a mere pretence. Service of this kind is service rendered to the devil, not to God. To the jurists we may refer the legal aspect of the matter. The function of the preacher is to set forth, without compromise or mere worldly consideration, the moral aspect of it in accordance with the principle of ideal justice, as contained in the divine Word. Even the jurists must confirm from their law-books the condemnation of undue interest and profiteering which the Gospel teaches.

IV. LUTHER AND BIGAMY

There are blots on his record as an evangelical moralist. With two of these—his savage incitement to the bloody repression of the peasants and his approval of the death sentence against the Anabaptists—we have already dealt. Equally compromising, from the standpoint of Christian morality, his action in the wretched business of the Landgrave's matrimonial infidelity. The Landgrave had, at the age of barely nineteen, been married to the daughter of Duke George of Saxony, who had borne him seven children. Their union, nevertheless, erelong led to antipathy[1] and habitual conjugal infidelity on the part of the voluptuous husband. His immoral life accorded ill with his evangelical profession, and he seems to have had his seasons of remorse on this score, and refrained from partaking the Lord's Supper for fear of certain damnation. He ultimately contracted syphilis as the result of his excesses. His diseased condition and his troubled conscience led him in 1539 to face in earnest the question of reforming his immoral life. The obvious method of doing so, from the Christian standpoint, was to mortify the flesh and live a clean life. This heroic method the inveterate voluptuary could not bring himself to adopt, conscience and Christian duty notwithstanding. He could, he averred, only avoid fornication by entering into a union with a more attractive consort. Such a prospective consort he had, by the year 1539, selected in Margaret von der Sale, lady-in-waiting to his sister, the Duchess of Rochlitz, with whom he had fallen in love. Instead of following the example of Henry VIII. and adopting the expedient of a divorce in order to gratify his passion, why not follow the example of the patriarchs and other Old Testament worthies and take a second wife? He succeeded in persuading himself of the legitimacy of this expedient, even from the Christian point of view,[2] and ultimately the lady and her mother agreed to the proposed bigamous union, on condition that he obtained the sanction of the theologians, the Elector of Saxony, and certain other magnates.

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[1] For the Landgrave's objections to the lady, see his communication of Dec. 1539 to Luther and Melanchthon, " Corp. Ref.," iii. 852.

He had already, in 1526, sounded Luther on the question of the permissibility of bigamy for the Christian. Luther answered in the negative: "It is my faithful warning and counsel that a Christian can have no more than one wife. Not only because of the offence, which every Christian is bound to avoid, where no necessity exists, but because there is no word of God that sanctions such an expedient for the Christian."[3] Only in case of the leprosy of the wife, or other compelling reason, might such an expedient be adopted. The negative is not absolute. But evidently Luther did not contemplate that such a reason could apply in the Landgrave's case. He now turned to Bucer in the hope of receiving the desired sanction, through his mediation, from the Wittenberg theologians. At an interview at Melsungen, towards the end of November, for which his physician, Gereon Sailer, had prepared the way by a visit to Strassburg,[4] Bucer reluctantly admitted that, in view of his need, and in the light of the practice of polygamy in the Old Testament, the proposed union was permissible as the only safeguard against fornication. He qualified his approval, however, with the stipulation that the union should be kept strictly secret, in order to obviate the scandal which its divulgence would evoke. He further undertook to persuade Luther and Melanchthon to agree, and to this end repaired to Wittenberg.

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[2] See his reasonings on the subject in Lenz, "Briefwechsel Landgraf Philipp's mit Bucer," i. 353.

[3] Enders, v. 411.

[4] Lenz, i. 345-346.

In spite of Luther's emphatic declaration in 1526 of the Christian obligation of monogamy, except possibly in very exceptional circumstances, both he and Melanchthon had, five years later, suggested that Henry VIII. might solve his somewhat similar matrimonial problem by this expedient in place of a divorce, which would be unjust to his queen, Catherine, and was therefore inadmissible.[5] Both had advanced in support of this suggestion the Old Testament example of the patriarchs, David and others. They were, therefore, now hardly in a position, in view of the Landgrave's communication [6] of his desperate condition, which Bucer submitted and supported,[7] to refuse outright to him what they had been prepared to concede to Henry VIII. Hence the compromising document which, as the result of a hurried deliberation, they drew up and signed on the 10th December 1539. Both declared that monogamy is the universal divine law, as proclaimed in the beginning of Genesis, and would not sanction any public departure from it or defiance of it. Polygamy was permitted by God to the patriarchs and others in deference to the weakness of the flesh. But since he originally instituted monogamy and Christ confirmed its institution, the Church has accepted it as the divine law, and no law may be made to the contrary. Dispensation might be permissible in case of necessity, and they would not absolutely rule out a dispensation should the necessity be proved. This is so far in accordance with the deliverance of 1526, and it would have been well if they had stopped here and simply rebutted the reason adduced by the Landgrave for departing from the Christian practice. Instead of so doing, they glide into the slippery path of casuistry. Like Bucer, they would only consider further the proposed bigamy on condition that it should be kept absolutely secret.

[5] Enders, ix. 88 (Sept. 1531); "Corp. Ref.," ii. 526 (Aug. 1531).

[6] "Corp. Ref.," iii. 851 f.

[7] Enders, xiii. 80.

Otherwise the Landgrave and his advisers would lay themselves open to the charge of favouring polygamy like the Anabaptists, and the evangelical party would be accused of transforming liberty into licence. Moreover, such an example on the part of the prince would lead private persons to imitate it, and would fatally injure his reputation. They rightly deplore and speak very plainly of his immoral life, beg him to take a more serious view of his marital obligation, and remind him of the high evangelical moral standard, which is not to be trifled with, and of the evil effects of doing so. His duty is to resist the lusts of the flesh, like every other Christian, in accordance with the teaching of the Gospel. Nevertheless, in consideration of the assurance that his princely grace cannot practise continence, they are prepared to grant a dispensation, under the condition of the strictest secrecy. Such secrecy is absolutely essential, since such a bigamous union, if valid before God, is not valid in public law. It must, therefore, remain a private transaction, known only to the principals and the few persons in their confidence. The bigamous wife must appear before the world only as a concubine, and reasonable people will take less offence at this than at other excessive indulgence. If he can preserve an upright conscience, they are ready to admit that what is permitted by the law of Moses is not forbidden in the Gospel. "The Gospel does not change (prescribe rules for) the regulation of the external life. It brings eternal righteousness, eternal life; initiates a right obedience to God, and seeks to restore corrupt nature." In conclusion, they warn him against having recourse to the Emperor in this affair, as he had threatened to do.[8]

The document is a bad example of reasoning to a conclusion which the premises really rule out. The reader is left wondering how its authors, after plainly asserting the divinely ordained principle of monogamy and its confirmation by Christ and the Apostles, could put on paper such a piece of evangelical casuistry. The explanation, it seems to me, lies partly in their inherited beliefs, partly in what they deemed the exigencies of the situation. They retained the traditional assumption of the dispensing power of the Church as it had developed throughout the centuries, even in cases of fundamental moral obligation, though Luther had denounced in scathing enough terms, and not without substantial reason, the exercise of this power by the Pope and hierarchy.[9] As he told the Elector, in a letter to him in June 1540, cases of this kind had often occurred in the secrecy of the confessional, in which the father-confessor was faced with the question of absolving what in public could not be approved. His own preceptor in the Erfurt monastery, for instance, " an estimable old man," had often enough, to his own distress, had to deal with such, and had gone on the principle of trusting to the goodness of God, not of acting in accordance with the demands of actual law, in his decisions. It was precisely on this principle that he himself had acted in this affair.[10] They were further hampered by the uncritical and all too literal conception of the character of the Old Testament as a divine revelation, which they had also inherited from the past and from which they had not sufficiently emancipated themselves. The Old Testament being a divinely inspired book, and this divinely inspired book being a revelation of the mind and will of God, polygamy, even as a concession to human frailty, must have been practised with at least the divine connivance. It was a most questionable conclusion which a more critical and scientific apprehension of this revelation would have suggested to them, and which, in any case, as they themselves seem to feel, was clearly incompatible with the elevated moral standard of the New Testament. Moreover, as the conclusion of the document indicates, they allowed their anxiety to retain the powerful Landgrave within the evangelical fold to overrule their better judgment. Philip had been the master spirit of the Schmalkald League, and had accompanied his request for a dispensation from the obligation of monogamy with an intimation that, in case of refusal, he was prepared to turn to the Emperor and the Pope for the attainment of his purpose.[11] He could only obtain the Emperor's favour at the price of supporting the imperial policy, and this would involve the weakening of the Schmalkald League and the jeopardising of the Reformation.

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[8] Enders, xii. 319 f. The document was subsequently signed by Bucer, Melander, Philip's court chaplain, and some other theologians. Rockwell came to the conclusion that a draft of the document was brought by Bucer to Wittenberg, and that Luther and Melanchthon, as the result of the deliberation, merely signed it. "Die Doppelehe des Landgrafen Ph. von Hessen," 24 f. (1904). Brieger refuted this conclusion, and showed that the document was drawn up by Melanchthon. "Z.K.G.," 1908, 174 f. See also Küch, *ibid.*, 403 f.

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[9] The Pope had, for instance, suggested to the envoy of Henry VIII. the feasibility of bigamy as a solution of his matrimonial problem. See Letters and Papers of Henry VIII., iv. 6627, 6705, and app. 261.

[10] Enders, xiii. 80 (10th June 1540). Boehmer, " Luther im Lichte der Neueren Forschung," 180 f., and Köhler, " Luther und die Deutsche Reformation," 112-114 (1917), apologetically explain the transaction from Luther's standpoint—that of the law governing the mediæval confessional. The explanation, whilst it illuminates the mentality of the reformer, does not render his decision more palatable from the religious and moral point of view.

Hence, we conceive, the decision to make the best of a bad business and sanction what, even with the consent of Philip's spouse, which the libertine husband seems to have had little difficulty in obtaining,[12] they themselves felt to be very questionable from the standpoint of Christian morality. The secrecy of the confessional, which had covered up shady transactions of this kind in the past, and on which they insisted as a *sine qua non*, might be a formal safeguard of this morality, as far as the public conscience was concerned. But even if this secrecy could be maintained, it involved the equivocation of representing the bigamous wife before the world as only a concubine. Equally reprehensible is the pious cant about the conscience being right before God, whilst practising deception before man, which the Landgrave emphasised and in which the theologians participate. The conscience of autocratic, egotistic, and sensually disposed potentates, great and small, was no safe criterion of moral rectitude. In the case of a Henry VIII. or a Landgrave Philip, it might easily be only a device to authorise or render plausible the gratification of the lower passions. Moreover, even from the practical point of view, it was, to say the least, very naïve to assume that the proposed bigamy could long remain a secret. There were too many accomplices of the affair, which culminated in the ceremony performed by Melander, Philip's court chaplain, at Rothenburg on the 4th March 1540 in the presence of Bucer, Melanchthon, the Elector's representative Von der Thann, and several others, to warrant such a conclusion. The Landgrave himself was fain to inform his sister, the Duchess of Rochlitz, and the infuriated Duchess created a terrible scene over the intimation. Duke Henry of Saxony, uncle of Philip's lawful spouse, forced the mother of Margaret von der Sale to divulge the whole thing. The secret was, in fact, widely known or suspected within a few weeks, and in the face of the scandal which the report aroused, Luther and his theological accomplices were hard put to it to find sufficiently plausible pretexts wherewith to counter it. In June 1540 Melanchthon had a nervous breakdown at Weimar as the result of his mental perturbation, and it would probably have had a fatal termination but for the reviving influence of Luther's robust personality and his passionate prayers. At a conference at Eisenach in the following month on the subject (15th to 20th July), Luther was prepared to advise " a good, strong lie," rather than agree to the divulgence of the marriage, as the Landgrave now proposed.[13] Such a revelation would not only scandalise many of his fellow-evangelical theologians; it would cause a schism in the evangelical Church. If the Landgrave should carry out his intention of acknowledging the bigamy, disclose the concurrence of the theologians, and seek to avert a prosecution by courting the imperial condonation, then Luther would recall his sanction, confess that he had played the fool, and bear the obloquy of his exposure. The publication of the dispensation, given under the secrecy of the confessional, would, in fact, of itself annul it.[14] He was all the more disposed to adopt this course as a last resort, inasmuch as he had by this time come to doubt the sincerity of the Landgrave's appeal to conscience. He appears to have had substantial ground for his doubt. At all events, he wrote to the Elector that if he had known the fact to which he refers, before the application for a dispensation, "no angel would have brought him to give such a counsel." [15] Well would it have been for his own reputation, as well as the cause of the Reformation, had he been from the outset more sceptical as to the appeal to conscience, and had shown an adequate conception of what the ethical teaching of the New Testament demanded of him as an evangelical moralist. He, as well as the Landgrave, has his share of responsibility for gravely compromising the evangelical movement and contributing to the ultimate paralysis of the Schmalkald League.

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[11] "Corp. Ref.," iii. 855-856; Enders, xiii. 80.

[12] Lenz, i. 332.

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[13] The Landgrave, whilst temporising on the subject, actually went the length in 1541 of publishing a defence of bigamy under the title " Dialogus Neobuli," which was long erroneously ascribed to Bucer, but was probably written by Lening, pastor at Melsungen. Eells, " Attitude of Bucer towards the Bigamy of Philip of Hesse," 178. Luther was strongly tempted to reply, and had actually begun one, but the Elector was adverse, and he himself thought better not to carry out his intention. See Enders, xiv. 152, etc.; see also " Fünf Lutherbriefe " in " Studien und Kritiken " (1913), 299.

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[14] See the notes of the conference in Lenz, i. 372 f. (15th to 17th July 1540).

[15] Enders, xiii. 80 (10th June 1540).

CHAPTER IX

LUTHER AND HIS WORK (2)

I. Translator of the Bible

Next to the breach with Rome, we may justly regard his translation of the Bible as his most effective achievement as a reformer. It was the fruit of the recognition of the unrestricted right, and, indeed, the clamant obligation of the people to read the Bible in the common tongue as the source and standard of the religious life. With Luther this obligation is cardinal, and he did a great service to religion in insisting without ceasing on the importance of Bible reading for the religious life, in view of the fact that the Bible is the greatest spiritual force in the world. As we have noted, he completed the translation of the New Testament during the last three months of his sojourn at the Wartburg, and revised the manuscript with the aid of Melanchthon and others during the summer of 1522. It was issued on the 21st September,[1] and was followed by a second and revised edition in December.[2] He had already set to work on the Old Testament with the help of Aurogallus, the professor of Hebrew, Melanchthon, Cruciger, and other colleagues. But the hope of speedily accomplishing his purpose was frustrated by the magnitude and difficulty of the undertaking and the constant interruption of other duties. He, therefore, resolved to publish it in three instalments—consisting of the Pentateuch, the historical books from Joshua to Esther, and the prophetic and other writings.[3] The first instalment appeared in 1523, the second and part of the third (from Job to the Song of Solomon) in the following year, the remainder, consisting of the prophets and a number of the Apocrypha, during the next eight years. Finally, the whole translation, under the title of "The Bible, that is, the whole of Holy Scripture in German"—the fruit of thirteen years of strenuous toil—appeared in 1534.

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[1] Enders, iv. 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, iv. 40.
[3] *Ibid.*, iv. 23.

Before publication he had revised it with the assistance of a committee of his colleagues, consisting of Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, Jonas, Cruciger, Aurogallus, and the professional reader, Rörer, which held its sittings for this purpose in his dwelling.[4] He himself had made numerous corrections in the successive editions of the New Testament from 1522 onwards. Even so, he was not satisfied, and during the years 1539-41 the committee worked at a new revision of the whole Bible, which appeared in the latter year, and contained numerous amendments of the German text. This revision was intended to be final. In the preface to it, Luther tells us that his declining strength is no longer equal to the task of undertaking a new one "since I am now too weak for such a labour."[5] Nevertheless he continued to alter and amend to the very end, as the additional corrections in the editions of 1543, 1544, 1545, and 1546[6] prove.

Unlike his controversial writings, which he usually poured forth on the spur of the moment, the German Bible in its final form is a monument of the unremitting and painstaking toil of nearly a quarter of a century. Much of this toil was expended on the Old Testament. In contrast to the astonishing rapidity and comparative ease with which he turned the Greek New Testament into the common tongue at the Wartburg, in the winter of 1521-22, is the long-sustained effort which it cost him to give an adequate rendering of the Hebrew Scriptures, especially the Book of Job and the prophetic books. His main difficulty did not consist in lack of familiarity with the Hebrew language. From an early period he had striven to acquire a working knowledge of the language. He had already, in the Erfurt monastery, begun the elementary study of it.[7] When at Rome in 1511-12, he is said to have sought instruction from a Jewish physician[8] in order, apparently, to be able to understand his Psalter in the original. His early lectures on the Psalms show at least a rudimentary knowledge of the Hebrew grammar and vocabulary, and his second course on the Psalms[9] (1518-19) affords additional evidence of the fact. At the Leipzig disputation, Mosellanus was impressed by his familiarity with Hebrew as well as Greek, and as the incident in the inn at Jena, on the journey from the Wartburg to Wittenberg in 1522, reminds us, he habitually read the Psalter in the original. His knowledge of the language was, in fact, more considerable than has usually been assumed when he set himself, towards the end of the year, to give the people the Old Testament in their own tongue.[10] The available aids for the task were, indeed, meagre and unsatisfactory enough, judged by the standard of modern scholarship. Besides Reuchlin's grammar and dictionary and the expert knowledge of Aurogallus, Cruciger, and other friends, he derived some help from the mediæval "Glossa Ordinaria," Lyra's Commentary, the Septuagint and Vulgate versions of the Old Testament. He owed more, however, to his own reading of the original text than to the available help of the grammarians. "I have learned more Hebrew," he tells us in his "Table Talk," "in my own reading by comparing words and passages in the original than by going merely by the rules of grammar. . . . I am no Hebraist according to the grammar. I do not allow myself to be cramped by its rules, but go freely through the passage."[11] He adopted the method of a free, as against a literal, translation. Though the method might have its drawbacks from the point of view of exactness, it was the one best fitted for his purpose of conveying the meaning of the text to the German reader. He, therefore, brushes contemptuously aside the objections of the wiseacres (*Meister Kluglinge*), who object that "he has departed so freely from the letter in so many passages, and followed a different understanding from that of the Jewish Rabbis and grammarians." This he has done not from ignorance of the original or of the Rabbinic Glosses, but knowingly and of set purpose to make the meaning intelligible to the common reader. Words are there to serve the sense, not the sense the words. "To the wiseacres who reproach us, and also the pious people who perhaps also take offence at our method, we reply, What is the good of giving, without absolute necessity, such a stiff and strict rendering when the reader can make nothing of it? He who will speak German must not speak in the fashion of the Hebrew writer. He must far rather strive, when he has made out what the Hebrew writer says, to get hold of the sense of the passage and ask himself the question, How does the German express himself in such a case? When he has hit on the fitting German words, then let him leave the Hebrew words alone and freely give the sense of them in the best German he is capable of."[12]

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[4] "Luther's Deutsche Bibel" in the Weimar ed., iii. and iv. (1911 and 1923), in which the minutes of the sittings, edited by Reichert, are given. Walther, "Luther's Deutsche Bibel," 77 f. (1917).

[5] "Werke," 63, 6 (Erlangen ed.).

[6] Reichert has shown that the edition of 1546 had been corrected by Luther before his death. "Theologische Studien und Kritiken" (1918), 193 f.

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[7] Enders, iii. 379; *cf.* "Werke," ix. 115.

[8] "Luther and the Reformation," i. 141.

[9] Operationes in Psalmos, "Werke," v.

[10] Walther, "Luther's Deutsche Bibel," 43.

[11] "Werke," 62, 314 (Erlangen ed.).

He could, as a rule, make out the sense of the original without much difficulty. The great trouble was to render it appropriately and intelligibly into the vernacular, to convey to the German reader the thought and idiom of the Hebrew writer. "No one can imagine," he says, in reference to this continual struggle with the imperfections and limitations of the common medium, "what a toil the translation of the Bible has cost us, except those who have worked at it, for the grammarians have helped us little."[13] A correct German idiom was unknown among the learned of his time,[14] and he had largely to mould the language into an adequate medium of Hebrew thought and idiom. The task cost him untold effort. "I have from the beginning been well aware that I would find 10,000 who would cavil at my work before I would find one who could do the twentieth part of it as well. . . . I thought I had some learning, and am conscious that, by God's grace, I have more than all the sophists of the high schools. But now I realise that I have not yet mastered my own native German speech. I have not yet read a single German book or document written in the right German idiom. Nobody takes the slightest pains to speak proper German. . . . In brief, if we put all our faculties together, we shall still have enough to do to set forth the Bible in its true light, whether in regard to the contents or the language."[15] The difficulty of rendering the sense of the Hebrew writer sometimes drove him and his colleagues to distraction. Job, for instance, he found at times almost untranslatable. "It has often happened," he wrote on September 1530, "that we have for two, three, or even four weeks sought for a single word, and yet at times have been unable to find it. Thus Melanchthon, Aurogallus, and I have worked at Job, and sometimes we have hardly been able to do three lines in four days. Now that the translation is finished, every one can read and master it and run over three or four pages at a glance without a single stumble, all unaware of the lumps and blocks that we had to plane down with such sweat and desperate effort."[16] "We have such trouble in translating Job," he tells Spalatin (February 1524), "on account of the sublimity of the style, that it seems that he can less patiently bear our translation than the consolations of his friends."[17] Almost equally trying the rendering of the prophetic books. "O God," he groans, in a letter to Link (June 1528), in reference particularly to Isaiah, "what an arduous business it is to force the Hebrew writers to speak German! They will not leave their Hebrew tongue and imitate the barbarous German. It is like trying to compel a nightingale to eschew its most elegant melody, and adopt, while detesting, the monotonous call of the cuckoo." [18]

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[12] Summarien über die Psalmen und Ursachen des Dolmetschens (1531-33), "Werke," xxxviii. 11. For Luther's mastery in seeking to convey the Hebrew thought in German idiom, and feeling out, if I may so express it, the soul of the original, instead of producing a merely literal rendering, whilst striving to remain true to the grammatical meaning, see Hirsch, "Luther's Deutsche Bibel," 14 f. (1928). This does not, of course, do away with the necessity for revision, which the advance of modern scholarship has rendered necessary. On this revision Hirsch has some excellent pages, with a view to retaining the precious heritage of Luther's translation, whilst admitting the necessity for its correction in some respects.

[13] "T.R.," v. 58.

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[14] Walther, "Luther's Deutsche Bibel," 46.

[15] "Werke," 63, 24-25 (Erlangen ed.).

[16] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. II., 636. Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen (1530).

[17] Enders, iv. 300.

Only his wonderful linguistic sense, guided by the study of the popular dialects and the High German of the Saxon Chancellory, and backed by the assiduous assistance of his colleagues and friends, enabled him thus to compel the Hebrew writers to speak German. The result was a monument of his linguistic genius. As Walther forcibly remarks, "Luther became the great linguistic master primarily as translator of the Bible." [19] What he achieved in this respect, a comparison with the translations [20] which preceded or synchronised with his, is sufficient to show. The first printed German Bible, based on one of the numerous MSS. of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, appeared in 1466 from the press of Mentel, of Strassburg, and went through fourteen editions up to the year 1518. With this translation Luther may have been acquainted, as Grisar [21] and others contend, though Walther is of opinion that this cannot be maintained.[22] He probably had some knowledge of the translations of separate books, or the selections from them in the form of the vernacular Postils containing the lessons from the Old and New Testaments read on Sunday. He probably also, consciously or unconsciously, enriched his German vocabulary from this source. But it would be of little real help to him in translating from the original Hebrew and Greek, inasmuch as these translations were made from the Vulgate, and his was drawn directly from the original languages. Moreover, the translator of the printed German Bible had such an imperfect command of the Latin of the Vulgate and of the vernacular that his version was lamentably inaccurate, so awkwardly worded, so helpless in conveying the spirit and power of the original, that Luther, in spite of some improvements in the later editions, could only have learned how not to do it. In merely glancing through it, Eck discovered no less than 3,000 misrenderings of the Old Testament alone.[23] Of his contemporary Romanist rivals, Emser and Dietenberger paid him the unintended compliment of borrowing largely from his version.[24]

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[18] Enders, vi. 291.

[19] "Luther's Deutsche Bibel," 53.

[20] For a detailed account of the mediæval translations, see Walther, "Die Deutsche Bibelübersetzung des Mittelalters" (1889-92).

[21] "Luther," iv. 544 f.

[22] "Deutsche Bibel," 57. In his "Zur Wertung der Deutschen Reformation," 155-156 (1909), Walther concludes that Luther did not use this translation. See also Risch, "Luther Als Bibelübersetzer," "Theologische Studien und Kritiken" (1917), 291 f. Freitag shows that he used the German Bible printed by Zainer in 1475, and the Book of Pericopes published by him in this year. "Theolog. Stud. und Krit." (1927-28), 444 f.

In view of its substantial originality and its linguistic merits, compared with previous and contemporary translations, including even Haetzer and Denck's meritorious version of the Prophets, Luther was amply justified in maintaining its superiority to any existing one, whether Greek, Latin, or German. "The advantage of this translation," he told Mathesius, "is so great that none can form a proper idea of it. What we formerly sought and never could attain with the utmost industry and ceaseless study, the perfectly clear text now provides without any trouble. We could never have found it in that obscure old translation" (the Vulgate). "It is so good and acceptable that it is better than all the Greek and Latin translations, and more is to be found in it than in all the commentaries. For we have cleared away all the stumbling-blocks, so that others can read it without hindrance."[25] "I dare say, though I have no desire to praise myself or claim that I have attained perfection, that the German Bible is clearer and more reliable in many passages than the Vulgate, and that, where the printers, with their usual negligence, have not corrupted it, we have now in the German language a better translation than in the Latin. I need only appeal in proof of this to the reader."[26] His appreciation was shared to the full by his colleagues and disciples. To Mathesius and Bugenhagen, for instance, it was the greatest marvel that God had wrought through him. Among the moderns, Scherer pronounced it the greatest literary achievement of the sixteenth century, and Reichert declared it "the crown of Luther's creations."[27] On the other hand, to Emser, Faber, and others of his opponents, it was an unwarranted and heretical deviation from the authoritative Vulgate version, though they were fain to pay it the tribute of lavishly borrowing from it in their efforts to supersede it.[28] With the Vulgate, instead of the original text as the only admissible standard, it was easy enough for these critics to find in it a large number of so-called "errors." In reality, many of these "errors" are corrections, which Luther was enabled to make by translating direct from the original languages, and which are a testimony to the superior scholarship and accuracy of his version. More forcible are the criticisms of modern scholars who have weighed it in the balance of a more advanced scholarship and have, of course, found it wanting. His method of free translation, as well as the relatively defective scholarship of the time, lent itself to inexactitude and left room enough for improvement. The need for revision in accordance with modern scholarship and the development of the German language led to the revised version of 1883-92, and the later revision completed in 1913.[29] At the same time, while the panegyrics of its admirers, contemporary and modern, require qualification, his version remains a superlative achievement from the literary as well as the religious point of view. "No other," judges Walther, who speaks with expert knowledge of the translations of the period, "devoted so much labour and time and care to the translation of the Bible as Luther did. No other produced a translation that might make anything like the same claim to the designation of 'a German Bible.'"[30] It may not be correct to say that he created the modern High

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[23] Walther, "Luther's Deutsche Bibel," 22 f., 56-57.

[24] *Ibid.*, 108 f.

[25] Quoted by Walther, "Deutsche Bibel," 173.

[26] "Werke," 63, 24 (Erlangen ed.).

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[27] Walther, "Luther's Deutsche Bibel," 135-136.

[28] See, for instance, Luther's ironic remarks on Emser's translation of the New Testament. Emser had practically stolen his book whilst disparaging it. "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 634-635.

[29] For a comparison of these, with Luther's translation and a criticism of them, see Hirsch, "Luther's Deutsche Bibel," 3 f.

[30] "Luther's Deutsche Bibel," 85.

German language. He made use of the available standard German and also drew largely on the common tongue of his time. But it is none the less his abiding merit that he, like no other, understood how to mould both into the medium for conveying the content and the spirit of the original to the people in a fitting and adequate form. In doing so he spared no effort to fit himself for his task by the arduous study of Greek and Hebrew, and availed himself of the scholarship of others and, at times, of the criticism even of his opponents. He showed a real scientific spirit in his untiring effort to perfect it and to make the original speak for itself. His main interest in undertaking it was, indeed, the religious, not the purely scholarly one. His object, he tells us, was to lead the people to drink from the fresh fountain of the Scriptures. All his books might well be left to moulder in the dust if only the Bible was read.[31] Whilst this marked religious motive might easily lead him to misinterpret and mistranslate at times, it undoubtedly fitted him to reflect in the vernacular in a wonderful degree the religious spirit and atmosphere of the sacred book. He certainly succeeded in impressing on the mind of the ordinary reader both its sublime elevation of thought and its direct appeal to the heart and conscience. Modern scholarship may give the contents more accurately; it can still learn from him how to do so in language that can grip and hold the reader and bring him under the spell of the original. He understood, as none of his contemporaries did, how to adapt the words to the subject in order to bring out its characteristic religious tone and feeling. He could draw on a rich religious experience that instinctively responded to the message of the sacred text. To him a deep personal piety was more essential to an understanding of the Bible than mere book learning. "Translation is not every one's art. It is indispensable for this work to have a right pious, true, reverent, experienced, and responsive heart."[32] "This I can testify with a good conscience, that I have devoted the greatest fidelity and diligence to this work, and have never had a thought of deception. I have never taken, or sought, or gained a single penny for it. Nor have I sought my own honour, God knows, but only the service of my dear fellow-Christians and the glory of Him who sitteth on high, joyfully and with all my heart."[33] In this personal experience of the Word, Riehm rightly finds the secret of the wonderful skill as well as the verve with which he reproduced the spiritual message of the sacred writers,[34] and which contributed so largely to make his version "substantially a master work in respect of the rendering of the original."[35]

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[31] "Werke," 63, 403 (Erlangen ed.).

[32] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. II., 640.

His profession of fidelity to the original is substantially warranted. On the other hand, the translation does show here and there the trace of his personal religious convictions. The insertion of the adverb "only" in Rom. iii. 28 is a reflection of his doctrine of justification by faith alone, though, as he himself maintains,[36] it served to make clear what the Apostle undoubtedly taught in this passage. Similarly, in both the translation and the prefaces to the various books, the influence of his antagonism to the institutions as well as the doctrine of the mediæval Church is evident enough. He discards, for instance, the word "priest" as the equivalent for the New Testament "presbyter," and substitutes for it the more correct term "elder." He invariably translates the word "Church" by "congregation" or "community" (*Gemeine*) in evident revulsion from the papal-hierarchical organisation of his own time, and applies it only to the heathen temples of the Old Testament. In the rendering of the Psalms in particular, one feels at times that the thought uppermost in his mind is his polemic with his own enemies and persecutors.[37]

That the people eagerly appreciated this best of all gifts is proved by the number of editions which were required to satisfy the demand for it. "Before Emser could produce his counter-translation," says Cochlaeus, "Luther's New Testament was multiplied to such an extent by the printers that even tailors and shoemakers, women, and every simpleton who had turned Lutheran and had learned to read a little German, turned to it with the utmost eagerness as to the fountain of all truth. Many carried it about in their bosom and sought to commit it to memory."[38] In spite of the high price (1½ gulden—40 marks, or £2 in present-day currency) of the first Wittenberg edition, a second was called for within a few weeks. The insistent demand led other printers to issue inaccurate editions of it without asking Luther's permission, and merely to satisfy their greed, greatly to his indignation. Within little more than two years (1522-24) fourteen editions were issued from Wittenberg and sixty-six elsewhere, and up to the year of Luther's death the number of editions of the whole Bible, or parts of it, had risen to about 377, embracing over 1,000,000 copies, excluding the Low German versions of it.

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[33] "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 640.

[34] "Luther Als Bibelübersetzer," "Theologische Studien und Kritiken" (1884), 310-311.

[35] *Ibid.*, 304.

[36] "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 636 f. The saying in the previous page in reference to this insertion is jocular. Doctor Martinus Luther wils also haben und spricht Papist und Esel sei ein ding. Sic volo, sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas. See Holl, "Gesammelte Aufsätze," i. 569-570 (1927). The jocular character of the saying has been overlooked by Luther's more superficial Roman Catholic critics.

[37] Riehm, 312-314.

II. Exponent of the Bible

Luther's theology centres in the Bible. "How," he asks, "can one become a theologian?" The answer is, "By the study of the Bible." The student of to-day has, in this respect, a great advantage over his predecessors of the old school. He has the Bible, which is now so clear that he can read it without any impediment. The new theology is based on it, and with the "Loci Communes" of Melanchthon in addition, he can become a theologian whom neither the devil nor the heretics can upset. After the Holy Scripture there is no better book than the "Loci." All the works of the Fathers and the scholastic theologians are nothing in comparison. If he chooses, the student may read in addition his Commentaries on Romans, Galatians, Deuteronomy, and John's Gospel "for edification." It is in this new mould that the true theology is fashioned.[1] "This is the golden age of theology. It cannot rise higher, because we have come so far as to sit in judgment on all the doctors of the Church and test them by the judgment of the apostles and prophets."[2]

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[38] De Actis et Scriptis, 55.

To his activity as controversialist and leader of the evangelical movement Luther added that of Professor of Holy Writ. Melanchthon and his other colleagues shared in the work of exposition, and so distinctive did this feature of the academic instruction become that the Theological Faculty might best be described as a school of Bible study.[3] As Professor of Holy Scripture he gave, as a rule, from two to three lectures a week,[4] though these were not seldom suspended by illness and his multifarious activities as reformer. He did not attempt in these lectures a continuous exposition of the whole Bible, as Zwingli did in his sermons at Zürich. He limited himself to selected books, whilst delegating others to his colleagues. These included the Pauline Epistles, the First Epistles of Peter and John, the Psalms, the prophets, the Solomonic writings, Deuteronomy, and Genesis, or, as he called it, the First Book of Moses—the latest and longest of these lecture courses, to which, with occasional interruptions, he devoted the last ten years of his life (1535-45). Besides lecturing, he preached two sermons a week, in addition to the Sunday sermon, and in these sermons he occasionally expounded parts of the Scriptures. Witness his expositions of the third and fourth chapters of John's Gospel, and of Matthew, chapters xviii.-xxiv.[5] He was never satisfied with these courses as originally delivered, but was always revising and improving them, as the revision of those on the Psalms and Galatians shows.

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[1] "T.R.," v. 204.

[2] *Ibid.*, i. 108.

[3] O. Ritschl, "Dogmen-Geschichte des Protestantismus," ii. 13 f. (1912), and Karl Bauer, "Die Wittenberger Universitätstheologie," 14 f. (1928), are of opinion that the Reformation was derived not from Luther's personal religious experience, but from his new interpretation of the Bible. They represent it as a theological movement. To eliminate the factor of Luther's personal experience is, however, to ignore a very important element in it. The Bible and Luther's spiritual experience are closely related. It was from the *experienced* Word that he developed his theology. See "Werke," ii. 107, and many other passages.

[4] Ficker, "Luther Als Professor," 5 (1928).

[5] In "Werke," xlvii.

The lecture as a medium of academic instruction was far more important in those days than in ours, when the multiplication of text-books has greatly diminished the professorial monopoly of knowledge. In Luther's day the student was far more dependent on the prelections of his teacher, and was concerned to take as copious notes as possible. Moreover, what he taught was so original, so novel, that the current literature on the subject of the lectures would not, in any case, have made note-taking superfluous. Note-taking was, however, by no means easy. At first he adopted the method of dictating the main points of the lecture and then freely elaborating them. But he was too much of the born orator to submit indefinitely to the irksome restraint of this method, and he ultimately discarded it for that of the sustained discourse. He spoke rapidly—"faster than anyone could write it down," later wrote Baumgartner to Brenz.[6] Only the few could, by the use of the rudimentary shorthand of the period, transfer to their notebooks at least a rough outline of his rapid utterance. In this respect he was not the discriminating teacher, who severely restrains himself by the needs of his students, and has perforce to bridle exuberance of thought and utterance. As lecturer as well as writer he confesses his proneness to "verbosity." However carefully he might prepare the lecture, he did not slavishly stick to his notes, and often allowed himself the pleasure of extemporising in a mixture of Latin and German, "more verbosely than I could have wished," he admits.[7] "Philip is more concise than I. I am a talker, more of a rhetorician."[8] Hardly a good lecturer from the point of view of the student with the spectre of examinations before his eyes, and striving to get the main things concisely into his mind. Nevertheless, what an inspiration it must have been to listen from day to day in Luther's classroom, in spite of the despair of note-taking. "Marvellous is the power of the spoken word."[9] None could better than he exemplify the truth of the saying. Even in our day of the multiplied text-book, the inspiration and the direction of the teacher, who understands his business, is an indispensable adjunct of the printed word. From this point of view Luther was supreme among the teachers of his day. He could not merely impart like the more methodic Melanchthon; he could enthuse and crowd his class-room with eager, enthusiastic disciples, who included graduates as well as undergraduates, and even some of his university colleagues. His students, we imagine, would not readily have missed a single lecture. Part of the attraction was due to the originality of his message. But no small part of it was due also to the arresting form in which he conveyed it. He adapts his style to the content of the book he is expounding. He brings out strongly, for instance, the antitheses in the Epistle to the Galatians and reflects the verve of the Psalms and the Song of Songs. To render these adequately one would require to be a poet. "If only we could render it in poetic form as in the Bible," he says of the Song of Songs.[10] We must accustom ourselves to the diction of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, which have their own language, just as Law, or Medicine, or Philosophy has.[11] Our souls must be attuned to the Word.[12] Luther is, above all, a living man. In his excogitations on the text of the sacred book he is never far removed from actual life. He has a wonderful gift for relating the theme he is expounding to his own spiritual experience, his own impressions of men and things. He can live himself into the past and present it to his hearers as it has been revived by his own vivid imagination and responsive soul. It is a living reproduction of the religious thought and life of the past that he strives to embody before the minds of his students. In this respect he is the seer as well as the teacher, and the seer is all the more arresting, inasmuch as he knows how to clothe his message in the rich texture of his own vivid style, to illumine by apt and often familiar illustrations. Paul he describes[13] as "a little, spare manikin like Philip." These graphic touches, whether familiar or sublime, are innumerable, and spring naturally from his lips out of the rich store of his observation of life and nature, of personal reminiscence, of historic incident, of his knowledge of literature, profane as well as sacred. He is the most realistic of commentators. "So real is Christ to me now as if He had at this very hour poured forth His blood."[14] He had in him the makings not merely of a theologian, but of a poet and an artist. Like Carlyle, he could paint in words. For him God is the supreme Artist, and we are the creation of the greatest of artists, "His poem, the verses, the songs which He composes."[15] It is on the historical rather than the metaphysical Christ—Christ as the human redeemer in His death and suffering—that he lays most stress, though, strangely enough, he prefers the abstruse Fourth Gospel to the more concrete Synoptists, and not seldom allows his doctrinal preconceptions to obscure his historic sense.[16]

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[6] Ficker, 32.

[7] "Werke," xlii. 1. Preface to lectures on Genesis. Extemporaliter enim et populariter omnia dicta sunt, prout in buccam venerunt verba, crebro, et mixtim etiam Germanica, verbosius certe quam vellem.

[8] "T.R.," v. 204.

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[9] Mirabilis profecto potentia verbi vocalis, "T.R.," iv. 121.

[10] "Werke," xxxi., Pt. II., 593.

[11] *Ibid.*, lii. 35.

[12] *Ibid.*, iii. 549.

To the preparation of his expositions Luther gave the most conscientious labour. He acquired a good working knowledge of the original languages, which he cultivated ever more assiduously with the years. He took advantage of the available exegetical aids—patristic, mediæval, and humanist. He makes use of the expositions of Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine, Ambrose; of Paul Burgos and Nicolas of Lyra, whom at first he disliked, but learned to appreciate. He avails himself of the Greek scholarship of Erasmus, which he rated highly, though he totally disagreed with what he deemed the frigid spirit and the doctrinal errancy of his exegesis. From the religious point of view he could, indeed, declare, " From Erasmus I have got nothing," [17] and, in contrast to him, emphasised his indebtedness to Staupitz as his early guide to the understanding of the Scriptures. From him he seems to have derived his predilection for the practical religious sense of the text, and the tendency to seek and see Christ as the focus of all revelation.[18] In Melanchthon he found a second Erasmus, who, besides being the compeer of Erasmus as a Greek scholar, espoused Luther's theology and ungrudgingly placed his scholarship at his disposal. In his colleague Aurogallus, whom the Elector Frederick, at his instigation, appointed to the Chair of Hebrew in 1521, he found a competent helper in his struggles with the Old Testament diction.[19] In addition to him, he availed himself of the help of other contemporary Hebraists—Pagnani, John Förster, Sebastian Münster, and Bernhard Ziegler.[20] He used the 1519 edition of the grammar of Rabbi Moses Kimchi, who flourished in the thirteenth century.[21] For his lectures on the Psalms he could avail himself of the first Hebrew Psalter published in Germany in 1516.[22] He could justifiably say that he had read more than his enemies were willing to admit. " He had," he said, " gone through all the books " available for the purpose of his lectures, and as evidence of the fact, he tells them that for the Epistle to the Hebrews he had made use of Chrysostom, Jerome for Titus and Galatians, for Genesis, Ambrose and Augustine, for the Psalter all the possible commentators. He was, in fact, so conscientious in preparation that he often dreamt that he was about to preach or lecture without having any idea of what he was going to say.[23] A sure indication of the anxious care with which he prepared for the pulpit and the lecture desk. He found fault with the many careless preachers who ventured into the pulpit without due consideration beforehand of what they were going to preach.[24]

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[13] "T.R.," v. 7.

[14] "Werke," xliv. 819. Tam recens mihi nunc Christus ac si hac hora fudisset sanguinem.

[15] *Ibid.*, xliv. 572. Ipse poeta est, nos versus sumus et carmina quæ condit.

[16] For a detailed and vivid delineation of Luther as lecturer, see Ficker, "Luther Als Professor," 15 f., and notes. He does not, however, always give the correct references. See also Volz, "Theol. Stud. und Krit." (1927-28), 167 f.; Schubert, "Zu Luther's Vorlesungsthätigkeit" (1920).

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[17] " T.R.," i. 80.

[18] *Ibid.*, ii. 112, 582. See also Bauer, " Die Wittenberger Universitätstheologie," 21 f., and Wolf, " Staupitz und Luther," 253 f. (1927).

[19] Bauer, *ibid.*, 104-108.

[20] " Werke," xliv. 755. On his opinion of these, see " T.R.," iv. 608. Nos in Germania habemus multo doctiores. Nunc Ziglerus, Munsterus, Forstemius longe sunt doctiores septuaginta interpretibus.

[21] Enders, ii. 12.

[22] Walther, " Luther's Deutsche Bibel," 40; Bauer, 15. On his wide knowledge of the mediæval theologians, early and late, in his early lectures as exponent of the Word, see A. V. Müller in " Luther in Oecumenischer Sicht," 42 f. (1929).

At the same time, he is conscious of the inadequacy of his knowledge and his power to do full justice to the text. His first course on the Psalms he erelong learned to estimate as "mere trifles altogether worthy of the sponge," and even the second course is still confused and undigested.[25] He was not satisfied with the exposition of Genesis even after ten years of labour. He declared it to be weak, and blamed the distractions of his overtaxed life. "Doing much and doing well do not consort together."[26] "I know only too well," he confesses in the preface to the Commentary itself, "that I have treated of these great themes more meagrely than was befitting or behoveful."[27] He finds it impossible at times to make sense of a passage, and prefers to confess his ignorance rather than foist on the reader a forced exegesis.[28] "I know," he told Jonas, who was ever ready with a solution, and was apt to get angry over his hesitation to agree with him, "that I am ignorant of much. I have preached for twenty years and do not yet understand the passage, 'The just shall live by faith.'"[29] No one, he would say, becomes straightway the finished product. He was conscientious to a degree according to his light, and strove to be both an accurate and a clear exponent. "This one thing I have set before me—to avoid as far as possible obscurity, and strive with all my might to render clearly what I wished to be understood."[30]

Towards his predecessors—patristic and mediæval—he was at first disposed to be deferential. Erelong, however, he adopts a critical and independent attitude, which grows on him with the years. At the outset he accepts the conventional assumption of the fourfold sense of Scripture—the grammatical or literal, the allegoric, the tropological or moral, the anagogic or spiritual sense, which the scholastic theologians derived from the Fathers. "Thus the word Jerusalem is, in the literal sense, a city in Palestine; allegorically it designates the Church; morally it may mean the order of civil society; whereas analogically it points to eternal life." [31] The allegoric interpretation, in particular, was not wholly due to lack of perception of true scientific method. It was, at times, a serious attempt to get over the letter of Scripture, where, for instance, it contained discrepancies, contradictions, and especially morally objectionable statements. It was by no means the purely perverse or childish device, which at first sight we are apt to regard it, and Luther liberally applied it in his first course on the Psalms. His belief in it explains his early dislike of Lyra, who emphasised the primary importance of the literal historic interpretation of Scripture. "When I was a monk, I was an adept in allegory. I allegorised everything. But after lecturing on the Epistle to the Romans I came to have some knowledge of Christ. For therein I saw that Christ is no allegory, and learned to know what Christ actually was." [32] From this time he more and more discarded this artificial method, except where the subject-matter of the text seemed to demand or admit its application. If used at all, it should only be for the purpose of illustration or rhetorical ornament,[33] though he did not always strictly observe his own rule. The second course on the Psalms (1519-21) shows a marked advance in method and content on the first (1513-15).

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[23] "T.R.," iii. 358.

[24] *Ibid.*, iii. 357. Multi sunt temerarii et securi nihil curantes quid et quomado prædicant.

[25] Enders, i. 27; iii. 92.

[26] "T.R.," iii. 689.

[27] "Werke," xlii. 2. Quam decuit aut oportuit.

[28] *Ibid.*, xliv. 735. Ego non amo coactas sententias, et si nihil possum adferre conveniens alicui loco, libentius fateor me nescire.

[29] "T.R.," iii. 678-679.

[30] "Werke," xlii. 1-2. Non quod falsa me dixisse mihi conscius sim, etc.

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[31] H. Preserved Smith, "Essays in Biblical Interpretation," 57 (1921); *cf.* 45 f.

[32] "T.R.," i. 136.

[33] "Werke," xlii. 310. On the Rabbinic exegesis and that of Philo and Augustine in reference to the dimensions of the ark (Gen. vi. 15). Sunt allegoriæ hae, si non prorsus eruditæ tamen innoxiæ, quæ nullum errorem secum trahunt et quibus extra disputationes ornamenti causa uti liceat.

There is much less allegorising, and he has become decidedly more critical of the views of the Fathers.[34] Augustine, Jerome, Athanasius, Hilary, and other Fathers may be highly edifying, but they are often enough very remote from the meaning of the text.[35] From this point of view, not only Origen and Jerome, but even Augustine, whose Biblical studies he otherwise rates highly,[36] incur his animadversion. "In the whole of Origen," he says, in reference to his constant spiritualising, "there is not a single word about Christ." He is equally contemptuous and equally one-sided in his judgment of Jerome. He would, in fact, prefer, he wrote to Gerbel in 1523, in commending to him Melanchthon's "Annotations on the Gospel of John," that there were no commentators and that the pure Scripture, as taught by the living voice, should everywhere reign.[37] He now prefers Lyra to almost all the interpreters on account of the attention which, following Rabbi Rashi, he devoted to the literal meaning of the text. There is truth, if also exaggeration, in the couplet :—

Si Lyra non cantasset,
Lutherus non saltasset.[38]

(If Lyra hadn't sung,
Luther had not danced.)

In this respect he is at one with Erasmus, who also emphasises the importance of the genuine sense of the text, though he dislikes and disagrees with his exegesis. In his own application of the historic method he knows no master, and in his hands it assuredly produced remarkable and distinctive results. He claims to be independent of all the doctors.[39] He will accept nothing in them which does not agree with Holy Writ. "Let it alone remain the judge and mistress of all books."[40] He condemns the appeal of opponents like Eck, Dungersheim, and Emser to their authority as equally valid with that of Scripture.[41] He is a pioneer. "We have broken ground," he concludes the exposition of the Song of Songs.[42] Assuredly no vain boast. He went far further in the rejection of the allegoric sense than any of his predecessors or contemporaries, Erasmus included. It was by means of this sense that the Church could make plausible many of its claims and its institutions, which the plain sense of Scripture not only did not warrant, but clearly disallowed. It thus provided to mediæval ecclesiasticism a whole armoury of arguments and vindications. This fact, as well as his objection, on rational grounds, to this method, explains his ultimate revulsion from it.

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[34] "Werke," v. 75. Omnium interpretationes afferre non est consilium, et tamen in tanta varietate quam eligam, ipse nondum certum habeo. Ad allegorias non facilis sum, præsertim quando legitimum et proprium illum germanumque sensum quæro, qui in contentione pugnet et fidei eruditionem stabiliat.

[35] *Ibid.*, v. 22.

[36] "T.R.," vi. 664.

[37] "Werke," xii. 56-57. Mallem et ego nullos uspiam commentarios, solis et puris regnantibus ubique Scripturis, viva voce tractatis.

[38] *Ibid.*, xlii. 377.

[39] *Ibid.*, ii. 523.

As an exponent of the Word, Luther's striving thus, ultimately, was to bring out and impress on his hearers what he deemed the real, in contrast to the artificially construed meaning of Scripture. He seeks first to grasp the general "scope" (*scopus*) of the text. He asks what generally does the writer of a Psalm or a passage desire to teach or reveal.[43] He takes account of history and geography as they tend to illuminate the text and the ways of God with man.[44] In treating of the text he concerns himself, in the first place, with the elucidation of the grammatical and philological sense of the passage.[45] He takes the utmost pains to be sure of the exact meaning of the words,[46] and warns against the tendency of the Rabbis and others to twist them to suit the views of the exponent,[47] from which he himself is not always free. This done, he grapples with the thought contained in the text, and strives to enter into and reproduce the religious atmosphere and experience of the writer in relation to his own soul. His exegesis is thus pre-eminently practical, experimental. For him, indeed, this reproduction, this appropriation of the religious sense of the text is the all-important part of the exposition. His interest in the Bible is mainly the religious interest. "Experience is necessary for the understanding of the Word. It is not merely to be repeated or known, but to be lived and felt." [48]

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[40] "Werke," xliii. 94. Ea sola maneat judex et magistra omnium librorum.

[41] Enders, i. 439. Tibi (Dungersheim) et Eccio mos est omnium dicta acceptare et verba Scripturæ attemperare verbis Patrum. . . . Mihi contra mos et exemplo Augustini, salva omnium reverentia, rivulos ad fontem usque sequi, quod et Bernhardus se facere gloriatur; *cf.* on Emser, Niemeyer's "Flugschriften"; Albrecht, "Theol. Stud. und Krit.," 1897, 744-745. See also "Luther and the Reformation," iii. 220.

[42] "Werke," xxxi., Pt. II., 769. Wir haben die ban gebrochen.

[43] *Ibid.*, v. 125, on the 5th Psalm, for instance. Quare scopus est meo judicio talis, quod propheta sit contra hypocritas, etc.; *cf. ibid.*, xiii. 88, 159, on Joel and Amos; xx. 9, on Ecclesiastes; xlii. 195, on Genesis.

[44] *Ibid.*, xliv. 530, 675.

[45] *Ibid.*, v. 27. Sed primo grammatica videamus.

Though he realises the importance of getting at the actual historic sense, and makes use of all the available means to this end, he is by no means satisfied with a purely scholarly, factual exegesis. He is alienated from the more objective method of Erasmus, repelled by what he deems its frigid spirit. Erasmus, indeed, emphasised the practical study of the Bible as the inspiration of the religious life, as well as the basis and norm of a sound theology.[49] But he differed from Luther both in his conception of the religious life and in his theology. His striving was to search out the truth in an objective spirit, and while Luther shared this striving, he differed both in his conception of the truth and the practical appropriation of it. For him the dominating factor in both respects is the evangelical, the soteriological one, as he had distinctively apprehended and experienced it. In this respect, his method is subjective rather than objective, and whilst it had its drawbacks from the scientific point of view, and might lead him at times to colour and even transform the thought of the writer by his own religious convictions, it was fitted to give him a deeper insight into the spirit and teaching of at least parts of the New Testament than an Erasmus, with all his scholarship, could attain. It explains, too, his tendency to concentrate on the New Testament writings which appealed to his distinctive religious thought and experience, and to view the Old Testament in the light of their teaching. In this sense the Pauline Epistles, especially Romans and Galatians, the Fourth Gospel, and the First Epistle of Peter, virtually form for him a canon within the New Testament Canon.[50] Despite this subjective tendency, his principle is to let Scripture be its own interpreter.[51] *Scriptura Scripturæ interpres*—The Scripture is its own interpreter—is his guiding maxim.[52] He so far strives to bring to bear on its exposition the comparative method. It will not do to quote texts as evidence, without consideration of their context. We must keep in view the whole teaching of Scripture. "It behoves the theologian, if he would avoid error, to have regard to the whole Scripture and compare contraries with contraries." [53] Of the unique grandeur, the supreme value of the Bible as the matrix of the religious life, Luther has the profoundest estimation. "You shall know," he wrote in the preface to the first volume of the 1539 edition of his German works, "that the Holy Scripture is such a book that it makes the wisdom of all other books foolishness, whilst it also teaches eternal life." [54] "The Bible, on account of its innumerable and infinite utilities, ought to remain in the hands of all pious people day and night." [55] Its light is as that of the sun compared with all other luminaries. "There is not on earth," he wrote from the Wartburg, "a book more lucidly written than the Holy Scripture. Compared with all other books, it is as the sun compared with all other light."[56] This judgment he stoutly maintained against Erasmus, who, in the free will controversy, had stressed the obscure passages. Obscure passages there may be—and he himself had a hard enough experience of their existence as translator and exponent of the Bible. But these are illumined by others, and in this borrowed light their darkness disappears. Their existence does not justify the claim of his opponents, that, in order to interpret the Bible, we must have recourse to the patristic and mediæval commentators and the didactic authority of the Church.

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[46] "T.R.," iv. 608.

[47] "Werke," xlii. 195. Hoc postquam factum est, deinde verba si ita fert grammatices ratio, ad rem ducenda sunt, et non res ad verba; *cf. ibid.*, 15, mihi non placet ut sine causa discedamus a Grammatica aut torqueamus violenter vocabula.

[48] *Ibid.*, v. 108.

[49] Scheel, "Luther's Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift," 10 f. (1902). On the difference in spirit and attitude towards the study of the Bible between Erasmus and Luther, see Erich Seeberg, "Luther's Theologie," 62 f. (1929).

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[50] Bauer, 147.

[51] "Werke," vii. 97, sui ipsius interpres.

[52] *Ibid.*, ii. 189-190, 404-405, and see Preuss, "Die Entwickelung des Schriftprincips bei Luther," 61, 98-99 (1901).

[53] "Opera Latina," iii. 185. Oportet ergo theologum, si nolit errare, universam Scripturam ob oculos ponere et contraria contrariis conferre.

[54] "Werke," l. 659.

[55] "T.R.," v. 663.

Hence his principle of the supreme and sole authority of Scripture. In his distinctive message as leader of the evangelical Reformation, the doctrine of the supreme authority of Scripture is the grand counterpart of his doctrine of justification by faith alone. This definite conclusion he reached, as we have seen, in the course of the Leipzig debate. "The Word of God is above all the words of man."[57] The mediæval Church would not, in a sense, have denied the saying. It held the supreme authority of the Bible even to the extent of asserting its verbal inspiration. But it maintained that it derived its authority from the Church. Since the days of the Gnostics, the Church had claimed to be in possession of the truth, and one of the reasons adduced in support of this claim was its possession of a Canon of apostolic writings, which it had collected in opposition to these heretics, and which it declared to be the only authentic and authoritative writings. They were authoritative not merely because they were apostolic, but because the Church, as possessing, in virtue of apostolic succession, "the certain gift of truth," guaranteed their sole authority as against the Canon of the Gnostics. From this it was an easy step to the assumption that their authority really rested on that of the Church. This was the mediæval contention, and it was this contention that Luther now challenged, with such far-reaching consequences, in putting forth the doctrine of the supreme and sole authority of Scripture. He broke radically with this contention, as he did in the case of the mediæval conception of the doctrine of justification by faith. In so doing, he set on foot, in the one case as in the other, both a religious and an ecclesiastical revolution. The Bible derives its authority from itself, not from the Church. But the Bible is no mere collection of authentic Scriptures. It is the Word of the living God which reveals His will and purpose to sinful man, and arrests and grips the soul. In its incisive appeal it certifies its divine origin and authority and power. In the assertion of this doctrine the experimental attitude to the Bible again comes into marked relief. "As Kant," says Seeberg, "substituted the inner law for the dogmatism of the moral philosophers, so Luther, by the recognition of the life-creating power of the Word, supplanted the demand for subjection to a merely outward authority." [58]

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[56] "Exposition of the 37th (36) Psalm."

[57] "Werke," ii. 263-264; "Luther and the Reformation," ii. 136.

Hence the distinctive and insistent appeal to the living, dynamic, renewing Word as the decisive factor and director of the religious life. The infallible Pope, the inerrant Council, the Fathers and the Schoolmen, yea, a merely mechanical Biblicism are at a stroke deposed from the seat of authority, which is transferred to the judgment and conscience and experience of the individual in immediate touch with the living Word. Only this living Word can ordain and constrain. "No believing Christian," as he asserted against Eck at Leipzig, "can be forced to recognise any authority beyond the sacred Scripture, which is exclusively (*proprie*) invested with divine right, unless, indeed, there comes a new and attested revelation." [59]

It follows for Luther that the Bible, not the Church, nor the Sacraments apart from the Word, is the grand and sovereign medium of salvation. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and through it the Spirit, in the first instance, operates on the heart and conscience. "The Word is the bridge, the narrow way (*semita*) by which the Holy Spirit comes to us." [60] "It is in and through the Word that the Spirit comes and gives faith to whomsoever He will." [61] Without this preliminary operation of the Spirit through the Word, saving faith is unattainable. Spirit and Word are indissoluble. "The Spirit is not given except only in, with, and through the faith in Jesus Christ, and faith comes not without God's Word, or the Gospel, which proclaims Christ—how He is the God-Man, who died and rose for our sake, and how, through faith, we are enabled to fulfil the works of the law." [62] Only after this experience does the Spirit operate in the Sacraments. Luther otherwise knows nothing of the free inspiration of the mind and religious experience of the individual by the Spirit apart from the Word, as the Spirituals maintained. Against them he elaborated his distinctive doctrine of Spirit and Word, though the doctrine was already there in gist years before his conflict with them. Whilst his teaching on the Word was a fresh and vivifying force as against the mechanical formalism of the time, his view of spiritual experience was too much narrowed by his own. It was a natural enough consequence of his spiritual wrestling, Bible in hand, for a gracious God. He is strangely oblivious of the words of his favourite Fourth Gospel, which might have led him to reflect on the desirability of enlarging his vision of the Spirit's operation. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, etc. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

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[58] "Dogmen-Geschichte," iv. 345 (1917, 4th ed.).

[59] "Werke," ii. 279.

[60] *Ibid.*, xvii., Pt. I., 125-126. Sermon, 18th March 1525.

[61] *Ibid.*, xviii. 139.

The Bible being the medium of salvation, it follows further that its grand and distinctive theme is Christ, or the Gospel. It is a revelation of Christ from beginning to end. The prophets (including Moses, David, and other pre-prophetic figures), as well as the Apostles, bear witness to Christ. The Christian theory, which Luther shared to the full, was that what was patent in the New Testament was latent in the Old.[63] The New Testament is only the public proclamation of the promises of the Old. Hence the inestimable value of the Old Testament as a witness to Him.[64] From this point of view, he pronounces it "an evangelical book." [65] The Christological testimony of the Old Testament from

[62] "Werke," 63, 122 (Erlangen ed.).

[63] H. Preserved Smith, "Essays," 57.

[64] "Werke," 63, 8 (Erlangen ed.).

[65] *Ibid.*, 63, 19.

Genesis onwards is with him a fixed idea.[66] In the Bible the prophets as well as the Apostles, as the mouthpiece of the Spirit, bear witness to Christ.[67] What treats of Christ—and for Luther this covers much in the Bible—is, in fact, specifically revelation. The rest is subsidiary and relatively unimportant. Christ is "the meridian sun" that illumines the darkness of men, and to those to whom the Spirit comes, everything in the Bible becomes clear as noonday.[68] The assumption that Christ is the grand theme of the Bible from beginning to end is a sweeping one, which modern criticism does not share or tend to substantiate. It shows a lack of true historic perspective, and he allows it to influence his interpretation, if not his translation, of the Old Testament books.[69] Even granting that the prophets, in the narrower sense at least, adumbrate the coming of a Messianic deliverer, it does not follow that they foresaw and foretold the actual Christ of the Synoptic Gospels or the Pauline and Johannine adaptation of the actual Christ. To find Him with Luther throughout Genesis or Deuteronomy is still more hazardous, and Luther could only succeed in doing so by the application of the Lutheran equivalent of the allegoric method—the analogy of faith, *i.e.*, the explanation of the text in the light of, or in accordance with, the dictates of Christian faith. In reality he only discarded this method to revive and apply it in another form, and its application might and did lead to results as arbitrary as those which he deprecated and denounced in the case of the Fathers and the Schoolmen. It was only by this means that he could also repeatedly see in the Old Testament the reflection of his doctrine of justification by faith, and could sometimes read it into passages which have really nothing to do with this doctrine.[70]

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[66] See, for instance, "Vom Papsthum in Rom," 161.

[67] Christum treiben, Christum zeigen.

[68] "Werke," xlii. 196. Nam hæc cognitio tantum venit ex Spiritu Christi qui ceu Sol meridianum illuminat tenebras.

[69] Riehm, "Luther Als Bibelübersetzer," 303. For a glaring instance of his mistaken application of the Old Testament text to Christ, see his comment on Gen. xlix. 10-12, "Werke," xliv. 759 f.

[70] See, for instance, his "Tract on Christian Liberty," "Werke," vii. 52; "Luther and the Reformation," ii. 265. For its application to the Psalms, see Holl, "Gesammelte Aufsätze," i. 549-550 (1927).

Luther has an unbounded veneration for the Bible as the God-inspired Book. His veneration embraces its language as well as its contents. In the Bible we have the very utterance of God, or the Spirit of God, or of Christ. Both prophets and Apostles have the Word direct from God.[71] The God of Truth speaks to us in the Scriptures, and therefore we must simply accept what stands there.[72] He adores the word of Paul or Peter as the Word of Christ speaking from their lips.[73] St Paul's word is God's Word. What he ordains is the ordinance of the Holy Spirit, and all that is contrary to his word and ordinance is assuredly contrary to God and the Holy Spirit.[74] The prophets and the Apostles, as men, were liable to error and sin. But the Spirit, in such cases, corrected their errors.[75] God Himself is the author of the Gospel.[76] The Holy Spirit is the author of Genesis.[77] The Scripture is God's, not man's, Word, and not a jot or tittle of it is in vain.[78] There are numerous passages of this kind in his works, and they have been adduced as proofs that, whilst denying the mediæval conception of the authority of Scripture, he retained the mediæval theory of its verbal inspiration. Harnack,[79] Loofs, and Scheel[80] contend that, under the influence of his conflict with the Spirituals, he thus burdened himself and the evangelical Church with an assumption which, besides being scientifically unsound, was in glaring contradiction to his free criticism of some of the books of the Bible. The discrepancy of these utterances with the free critical attitude adopted in the prefaces and summaries with which he introduced the various Biblical writings, appears, at first sight, striking and puzzling. These prefaces and summaries show his mastery of the Bible, which he seems to have known by heart. They are, too, models of lucid and persuasive statement and, unlike much of his controversial writing, show how fittingly he could treat a given theme on its own merits when he set himself to do so. In them we have his considered estimate of the Bible as the exclusive revelation and the medium of man's salvation. He discriminates between the various books of the Bible and assesses their relative worth. He seems, in fact, to differentiate between the Bible as the Word of God and the Word of God in the Bible. Whilst he has a profound veneration for the Bible as a whole, all its writers have not the same claim to divine inspiration. Nor have their writings equal religious validity. Among them he gives the first place to the Fourth Gospel, Paul's Epistles, especially Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and the First Epistle of Peter. His preference is governed mainly by doctrinal considerations. These writings show in most masterly fashion how faith in Christ overcomes sin and death and hell, and brings life, righteousness, and blessedness.[81] For this reason he rather ignores the Synoptic Gospels, as compared with the Fourth, and thinks that, in comparison with those which he prefers, all the other books might be dispensed with. He is, for this reason, rather prejudiced in his estimate of the Epistle of James, which he unwarrantably pronounces "a straw epistle," [82] and which, he holds, contradicts Paul and ignores Christ. What does not teach Christ is not apostolic, even if St Peter or St Paul should so teach.[83] It cannot be mentioned in the same breath with the Epistle to the Romans, in which "'there is so clear a light that it is quite sufficient by itself to illuminate the whole Scripture." [84] He criticises the Epistle to the Hebrews which, he thinks, was not written by an Apostle. It cannot, therefore, lay claim to apostolic authority, and does not accord with Paul's Epistles or the Gospels, though it contains much good teaching. He rejects the Epistle of Jude, and is doubtful whether the Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation, which does not appeal to him.[85] He omits passages like I John v. 7 as manifest interpolations, and notes the mistaken quotation from the prophets in Matt. xxvii. 9, and the discrepancy between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel in the account of the cleansing of the temple. He rejects as spurious " the Gospel of Nicodemus " and the so-called " Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans," which found a place in the mediæval Bible.

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[71] "Werke," xlvii. Sermon on the 23rd chapter of Matthew.

[72] *Ibid.*, xl. 593.

[73] *Ibid.*, xl., Pt. I., 173.

[74] *Ibid.*, x., Pt. II., 139.

[75] *Ibid.*, xl., Pt. I., 195 f.

[76] *Ibid.*, viii. 584. Deus autor evangelii.

[77] *Ibid.*, xliv. 532. Jam vero observandum est alium hujus libri authorem esse, nimirum Sanctum spiritum.

[78] *Ibid.*, v. 184. Ut nec jota nec apex frustra scriptus credatur.

[79] "Hist. of Dogma," vii. 246 (English trans.).

[80] "Luther's Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift," 55 f. (1902). For Loof's view, see "Dogmen-Geschichte," 747. He sees in Luther's literal acceptation of the words of Christ in instituting the Supper the most important evidence of his belief in verbal inspiration. In his argumentation, Luther, however, lays the stress on the passage, "This is My Body," as the *actual* words of Christ, not on their verbal inspiration.

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[81] "Werke," 63, 114-115 (Erlangen ed.).

[82] *Ibid.*, 63, 115-116; *cf.* "T.R.," v. 157. He later omitted the expression from the preface to it. Walther, "Zur Wertung der Deutschen Reformation," 170-171. Nevertheless, he retained this judgment to the end. See Thimme, "Luther's Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift," 66-67 (1903).

[83] *Ibid.*, 63, 157.

Equally free is his estimate and criticism of the books of the Old Testament. Moses used many sources and transferred certain things into his legislation from the customs of neighbouring peoples.[86] Whether Moses was the author of the whole Pentateuch is to him a matter of indifference. The Book of Kings is infinitely superior to Chronicles, and much more worthy of credence.[87] The books of the prophets are later compilations by their disciples and are, therefore, lacking in proper order.[88] The prophets were often wrong when they prophesied " of worldly affairs." [89] The later ones were dependent on the earlier, and sometimes built hay, straw, and wood, and not pure silver, gold, and precious stones on the right foundation.[90] The story of Jonah appeared to him " a lying invention," and if it did not stand in the Bible he would not believe it. He can only stand it as " a sign of the resurrection," and in this sense he finds it " very consoling." [91] He would have excluded the Book of Esther from the Canon,[92] and was doubtful about the Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes.[93]

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[84] " Werke," 63, 119.

[85] *Ibid.*, 63, 158-159. He later modified his judgment somewhat.

[86] *Ibid.*, xliii. 54. Ex vicinarum gentium consuetudine quædam transtulerit in suum populum.

[87] *Ibid.*, 62, 132 (Erlangen ed.).

[88] *Ibid.*, 62, 132; 63, 57, 74.

[89] *Ibid.*, 8, 23.

[90] *Ibid.*, liv. 3; 63, 379 (Erlangen ed.).

[91] " T.R.," i. 354; *cf.* iii. 550.

In putting the Bible into the hands of the people, Luther thus taught them to discriminate as to the relative value of its various components, and exercise the critical faculty on its contents. This discrimination and criticism are clearly incompatible with the belief in its verbal inspiration, and Luther, in spite of his emphasis on the Bible as the inspired Word of God, does not seem to have actually shared this belief, as Harnack, Loofs, and Scheel, reasoning from some of his sayings, contend that he did. The glaring inconsistency in his attitude towards the Bible, with which they charge him, does not really exist, though some of his utterances, if taken by themselves, appear to justify the charge. The theory of the verbal inspiration of Scripture is a product, not of Luther, but of the later Lutheran orthodoxy. Seeberg,[94] Thimme,[95] and others accordingly dissent from this judgment, and their dissent appears to be well founded. Luther's distinctive position is dependent on his fundamental contention that the grand theme of the Bible is Christ and His saving work. Only what treats of Christ is the essential of revelation as conveyed by the Spirit through the prophets and the Apostles. The rest is only of relative value, and is subject to criticism in the light of this cardinal fact. The principle which governs his attitude is not that of verbal inspiration, but the religious character and quality of the revelation. In regard to the New Testament, in particular, the Apostles, in their capacity as the commissioned emissaries of Christ Himself, are the infallible instruments of the Holy Spirit. What they teach, *i.e.*, Christ and His saving work, is, therefore, to be received as of absolute authority, and no rational criticism may dare into this sacred sphere. What is not apostolic, *i.e.*, does not treat of

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[92] "Werke," xviii. 666.

[93] *Ibid.*, 63, 41 (Erlangen ed.); *cf.* 62, 128.

[94] "Dogmen-Geschichte," iv. 342 f.

[95] "Luther's Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift," 63 f. See also Brieger, "Luther und Wir," 40 f. (1916); O. Ritschl, "Dogmen-Geschichte des Protestantismus," i. 69 f.; Winter, "Die Genetische Begründung der Schriftautorität bei Luther," 36 f. (1925).

Christ, is not thus absolutely valid. "This is the right test by which to censure (*tadeln*) the books of the Bible when we perceive whether they treat of Christ or not, since all Scripture treats of Christ [96] (Rom. iii. 21), and Paul will know nothing but Christ (1 Cor. ii. 21). What does not teach Christ is not apostolic, even if St Peter or St Paul should teach it. On the other hand, what proclaims Christ would be apostolic, even if Judas, Annas, Pilate, and Herod were to proclaim it." [97] This is for Luther the decisive proof of inspiration, and it enables us to understand how he could generally rate the Scriptures so highly and yet at times exercise the critical faculty so daringly in his judgment of them. His critical attitude is dominated, not by purely scientific considerations, but at bottom by his religious standpoint. It involves, however, the admission that the Bible is not to be uncritically handled or accepted according to the letter, apart from the spirit and a discriminating insight into its contents. It is, of course, apt to be arbitrary and one-sided, since it depends on his own conception of Christ and what constitutes the faith in Christ. This conception is, in fact, based largely on the Pauline-Johannine conception, and does not, for instance, take into adequate consideration the more concrete Synoptic conception of Him and His saving work. In his preference for the Fourth Gospel, he does not seem to be aware of the secondary status which, to a truly historic insight, it occupies as a source for the actual life and teaching of Christ.

He is not in this respect the father of modern Biblical criticism, though his principle of critical discrimination might ultimately lead this way. He is, in fact, the sworn foe of the application of a purely rational, historic criticism to the Bible. His unfortunate antagonism to reason, as applied in the religious sphere, led him, in contrast to Erasmus and Zwingli, for instance, to blaze the trail for the more unenlightened Biblicism of a later time, even if his own startling application of the critical reason was in the direction of the modern critical movement. His distinctive conviction is that reason, applied to Scripture in any other way than that which commended itself to him, can only lead to error and spiritual ruin. "You must, therefore, straightway renounce your own sense and understanding, for with these you will not attain the truth, but only with your own presumption precipitate yourself, and others along with you, from heaven into the abyss of hell, as happened to Lucifer. On the contrary, kneel down in your chamber and pray with real humility and earnestness to God to give you, through His dear Son, the Holy Ghost to enlighten, guide, and instruct you."[98] Meditation and Christian experience of its living power are, next to prayer, the necessary adjuncts of a true understanding of it. "*Oratio, meditatio, tentatio*—prayer, meditation, trial—these are the grand requisites. The more you distrust yourself and your thoughts, the better a theologian and Christian you will become. Would you flatter yourself with your own ability, then grip your own ears and you will find that you have gripped right thick, long, rough asses' ears."[99] He denounces and rejects in this and innumerable other passages of his writings the application of reason to the Word. He reproaches the sectaries who disagree with him in following their own wisdom in interpreting it, just as did the sectaries of St Paul's time. "So it comes to pass among us Germans to-day, now that we have declared the Gospel of God's grace, that every one will play the true master and claim a monopoly of the Holy Spirit, just as if the Gospel were preached in order that we should exercise our cleverness and reason on it and seek our own glory."[100]

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[96] *I.e.*, the grand theme is Christ.

[97] "Werke," 63, 157 (Erlangen ed.).

III. The Preacher

No small part of Luther's output as expositor was delivered in the pulpit. Like Wiclif, he not only translated the Bible; he was a most assiduous preacher, and gave himself to the work of training preachers. He was, in fact, a born preacher, though, like Knox, he was at first most reluctant to undertake the preaching office, and only began in obedience to the reiterated injunction of his Vicar-General, Staupitz. He was terribly nervous at the start. "Oh, how frightened I was at the sight of the pulpit," he says, in speaking of his first experience as a preacher, in the refectory of the monastery at Wittenberg.[1] As in the case of Knox, his initial diffidence contributed to make him one of the greatest of preachers. Preaching erelong became a passion, and he soon learned to regard his hearers as so many "logs" (*Klötze*), and speak the Word of God straight at them.[2] With Paul he could say, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." He preached on week-days as well as Sundays and Feast Days—sometimes several times a day. Like Knox, he preached to the end in spite of increasing weakness. His last sermon was delivered at Eisleben within four days of his death.

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[98] "Werke," l. 659.

[99] *Ibid.*, l. 660.

[100] *Ibid.*, 63, 139 (Erlangen ed.). His last sermon at Eisleben, 15th Feb. 1546, is couched in the same strain, "Werke," li. 187 f.

In his early preaching he adopted the conventional method, and delivered theological disquisitions to his brethren in the monastery in the Latin language and in the scholastic form.[3] Whilst he continued to use the Latin language in these sermons till the break up of the monastery, he erelong discarded the scholastic train of thought and style. In those which he preached in the parish church he made use of the vernacular, and though his German, to judge from his exposition of the penitential Psalms,[4] was at first very awkward, he gradually became the master of the spoken, as of the written Word in the delivery of his distinctive evangelical message to the people.[5] As in his early academic expositions, he allegorises liberally in these early sermons, which crowded the parish church, though there were some critics who censured his presumptuous zeal and questioned his evangelical doctrine.[6] His early sermons include an exposition of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer for the people. Almost from the outset he realised the importance of suiting his preaching to the intelligence of the ordinary hearer. In March 1519 he writes to Spalatin of his efforts to instruct the children and the unlettered in daily lessons in these rudiments of the Christian religion.[7] In this year he began a series of expository sermons in the parish church on Genesis and Matthew's Gospel,[8] and continued it into 1521. In the monastery on Sundays and Feast Days he preached on the portions of Scripture prescribed for the service of the day (*Postille*),[9] and so widespread was the interest aroused by these sermons that the Elector Frederick requested him to write a series for the instruction of the clergy. Hence the Latin "Postils," which he completed in the early summer of 1520 and published in March 1521.[10] As we have seen,[11] he followed it up with a series in the vernacular, written at the Wartburg for the edification of the people as well as the clergy, and issued from the press during his residence there.[12] Some time elapsed after his return to Wittenberg before he could resume the writing of the series,[13] and it was not till towards the end of 1525 that he was able to issue this second set from the press.[14] He seems thereafter to have discontinued the writing of the series. But during the next three years additional volumes were issued by Roth from notes of his sermons on the Pericopes, or prescribed portions of Scripture, made by some of his hearers.[15] Though he recognised these imperfect and uncritical compilations by rather reluctantly writing prefaces to them, they were greatly inferior to the series written by himself.[16] So dissatisfied was he that he set Cruciger to work on the revision of them,[17] and this revision of at least a part of them was ultimately published in 1544.[18] In 1532 he began to preach to his household on Sunday evenings, and continued these sermons till the end of 1534. They were also based on the Pericopes, and these "House Postils," as they were called, were noted down by Veit Dietrich and Rörer, and subsequently issued by them from the press.[19]

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[1] "T.R.," iii. 188.

[2] *Ibid.*, iv. 447.

[3] See his early Latin Sermons in "Opera Lat.," i. 41 f.

[4] "Werke," i. 154 f.; Köstlin-Kawerau, "Luther," i. 121.

[5] See "Luther and the Reformation," i. 264 f., for these early Sermons.

[6] See "Opera Lat.," i. 57, Sermon on St Stephen's Day, 1515.

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[7] Enders, i. 449.

[8] *Ibid.*, ii. 278, 319.

[9] *Ibid.*, ii. 224. These portions of Scripture were known as Pericopes.

[10] "Werke," vii.; Enders, iii. 98.

[11] "Luther and the Reformation," iii. 61 f.

[12] They are given in "Werke," x., Pts. I. and II.

[13] In March 1524 he writes to Hausmann that he is busy with it, and that it is being printed, Enders, iv. 308.

[14] Given in "Werke," xvii., Pt. II., and see Buchwald's introduction to this volume.

[15] Given in "Werke," x., Pt. II., xvii., Pt. II., xxi.

[16] See Buchwald's critical introduction to vol. xxi.

[17] Enders, xi. 127. Letter to Gerbel, 27th Nov. 1535. De Postilla tu honorificentius sentis quam ego. Extinctum enim vellem totum eum

These Postils, whether written by himself for publication or taken down by some of his hearers, represent only a fraction of his output as preacher. With only occasional interruptions due to illness, stress of work, or absence from Wittenberg, he preached all his life on week-days as well as Sundays, and in one passage of his "Table Talk" he speaks of preaching as often as four times a day. This was, of course, very exceptional. During the frequent and sometimes lengthy absences of Bugenhagen on mission work in north Germany and Denmark, he acted as his substitute as preacher and parish minister,—in 1528-29, 1530-32, 1537-39, for instance. We get a characteristic glimpse of his arduous labours as *locum tenens* on these occasions in a letter to Link in December 1530. "I am not only Luther, but Pomeranus (Bugenhagen), Registrar, Moses, Jethro, and what not—all things in all." [20] Even on his journeys he was never spared the obligation of addressing crowded audiences—not even on the last of them, that to Eisleben, in the winter of 1546, when, in spite of his weak condition, he had to mount the pulpit day after day. He never seems to have written out his sermons for delivery, and we owe their preservation to the notes taken by eager listeners like Dietrich and Rörer, Lauterbach and Aurifaber. Only a man endowed with the faculty of quick thinking and ready utterance could have been equal to the strain of this enormous output, which, apart from the half-dozen volumes

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librum. Et hoc ago ut Doct. Casp. Creutzigero mandem onus totius recudendi in novam et meliorem formam.

[18] Given in "Werke," xxii.

[19] Those by Dietrich in 1544; by Rörer in 1559. They are edited by Buchwald in "Werke," lii. A number of them are also given in "Werke," xxxvii.

[20] Enders, viii. 326.

of his Postils, fill nearly a score more of the portly volumes of the standard, but still unfinished, edition of his works. Besides this phenomenal output, how many of his sermons have escaped the attention of the note-taker? Unfortunately, we cannot always be sure of the exact diction of the preacher in these reproductions of his discourses, though, on the whole, the best of the reporters have succeeded remarkably well in conveying both the characteristic style and the content of his message.

Luther's sermons mark an epoch in the history of preaching and that of evangelical religion as well. They are homiletic in character, though he sometimes spoke without reference to a text, and freely expatiated on the theme of the day. He made it a rule to devote his sermons to the exposition of the Scriptures. The preacher must be "a good textualist" (*bonus textualis*)—thoroughly grounded in the Scripture.[21] He brought his hearers into contact with the living Word, and put the sermon in the centre of public worship. In both respects his preaching was an innovation. He represents, in fact, a far-reaching reaction from the conventional method of preaching and the mediæval conception of worship. Before his advent there were some remarkable preachers in the late Middle Age—Tauler, Wiclif, Gerson, Hus, Savonarola, and, in part, his contemporary, Geiler of Kaisersberg—who strove in their own way to infuse a living Christianity into their sermons and their hearers.[22] But none of them can stand as the model of Luther, who was too original to be anything but his own model. Striking, indeed, is the difference between the mediæval sermon and his, after he had shaken off the scholastic influence on his thought and his style. He not only introduced a new kind of preaching which became the model of the evangelical sermon; he revolutionised preaching in the Roman Catholic Church. In his day the sermon was entirely subordinate to the Mass as the supreme act of worship. Religious ceremonial was superior to edification. Luther, on the contrary, felt himself, like Paul, sent, not to baptize, but to preach. There was no adequate sense of the importance of preaching. The bishops were mostly dumb dogs and too much immersed in the things of this world to see that their subordinates duly instructed the people. Much of such preaching as there was consisted in reading a homily from the prescribed manuals in a language which the people did not understand, or which was imperfectly conveyed by the priest in the vernacular. The more scholarly preachers, who delivered their own sermons, indulged largely in abstruse and hair-splitting reasonings in the elucidation of questions, which might exhibit their ingenuity and their cleverness in juggling with words, but had precious little effect in edifying the minds or gripping the hearts of their audience. Many of the more popular preachers indulged in burlesque gestures or entertained their hearers with silly legends and anecdotes of questionable taste.[23] In his "Table Talk," Luther refers to both types as they existed in the Germany of his own time. He may exaggerate the foibles of the scholastic preachers who, he says, considered it effeminate and unmanly to name Christ and the prophets and Apostles, or their writings, in the pulpit. There was, however, little enough of sound scriptural instruction in their sermons, the subject of which was a theme, or saying, or question culled from Duns Scotus or Aristotle. These they divided, and then wandered into a number of Distinctions and Questions. Preaching was mere disputation, and those were esteemed the best preachers who performed these dialectic feats with the greatest agility. "The Bible," he adds in his exaggerated way, "was covered up, unknown, and buried." [24] In another passage he tells of the antics and oddities of the more popular orators. The Franciscan, Fleck of Leipzig, began his sermon with laughter, huzzaing, and shrieking. Magister Dietrich entertained his hearers with the popular song, "Yestreen we all were roaring fu'," as exordium. Another practised cock-crowing in his sermon, whereupon the sacristan, who had fallen asleep, woke up, and thinking that the preacher had shouted "The Lord be with thee," gave the response, "And with thy spirit." [25]

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[21] "T.R.," iv. 356.

[22] For a recent short account of them, see Garvie, "The Christian Preacher," 115 f. (1920).

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[23] See Ker, "History of Preaching," 95 (1895).

[24] "T.R.," iii. 145.

[25] *Ibid.*, ii. 549.

These are among the pleasantries with which Dr Martin was fond of entertaining his guests. Even if they are to be taken with a grain of salt, they reflect all the same the frivolous and unworthy tone of the popular pulpiteer of the time, to which he refers in his Sermons as well as his "Table Talk." "It is a strange and unchristian habit of preaching that has crept into the Church, where people come together to hear God's Word and learn the Scriptures, and where the preachers waste their time in serving up such ridiculous rubbish to the neglect of better things. So it has hitherto been the custom at Easter, Christmas, and other festivals to fall into this silly twaddle in order to keep the sleepy awake."[26]

"Now," he concludes, "we have passed from the time of joking to that of serious things." He has himself told us a great deal about his mode of preaching, and his immense sermonising is there to enable us to judge of its quality. He has summarised for us his conception of a good preacher. He must be apt to teach. He must have a good head and the gift of speech, a good voice and a good memory. He must know when to stop. He must put his whole body and soul into the sermon, devote his whole life and honour to his calling. He must bear with patience the gainsayer.[27] An essential of aptness to teach is to understand the art of simplicity. For Luther, Christ is the model preacher, the great Rabbi,[28] and Christ did not talk philosophy or theology, but the language of common life. He took His sayings from the things of everyday life, known to all. This simplicity is a great art. In a congregation like that at Wittenberg, containing a large proportion of simple folk, in addition to university professors and students ('Brother Studium,' as he called them), it means accommodating oneself to the understanding of Hans and Gretchen rather than that of Philip and Jonas, who know as much as he does. Even they can profit from the simple sermon. If he wanted to address *them*, he would pause, intimate that what followed, by way of parenthesis, was for their special benefit. "The

[26] "Werke," xvii., Pt. II., 208-209.

[27] "T.R.," vi. 193; *cf.* ii. 531.

[28] "Werke," xlvii. 451, Sermon on Matt. xxiii. 8-12.

real preacher ought to have respect in church to the youths and servant girls, who stand most in need of instruction. He ought to accommodate himself to them as a mother suckling her child."[29] "When I ascend the pulpit, I think only of preaching to the workmen and the servant maids, not to Jonas or Philip and the university men. They can study the subject in the Scriptures. If we preach only to them, the poor people sit and stare at us like cows."[30] "Albrecht Dürer used to say he had no pleasure in pictures with too many colours, but only the simplest and finely executed ones. Thus I like only sermons couched in simple language, so that the people can understand what is preached."[31] A parade of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin learning, for the purpose of winning the praise of stupid people, is out of place in the pulpit. "Speak plain German and eschew quoting Greek and Hebrew, as Zwingli did at Marburg."[32] Luther is specifically the people's preacher, in spite of his learning and his highly exercised dialectic faculty, to which a regular bout of logic was a keen pleasure. From this parade of learning and dialectic subtlety he soon learned to emancipate himself, in his supreme passion to win his hearers for his distinctive Gospel message. He is always the evangelist in the pulpit, however fiercely he may dispute with his scholastic opponents outside it, though he does not refrain from controversy in his sermons. We do not need to be assured that he could, if he chose, take up the cudgels in theology and philosophy with the subtlest doctors. For him simplicity does not mean mere drivel. It is nearly always combined with substance. He possesses a wonderful faculty for bringing his stores of knowledge and experience into play, in simple fashion, in the illustration and enforcement of his theme. Even when he allows himself to venture into the sphere of thorny exegesis, he shows a rare gift of simple, lucid explanation. "We preachers should accommodate ourselves to our hearers, and this is a failing of nearly all preachers that they so preach that the common folk learn very little from them. To preach simply is a great art. Christ understood and

[29] "T.R.," iii. 427.

[30] *Ibid.*, vi. 196-197; *cf.* iii. 310.

[31] *Ibid.*, vi. 350.

[32] *Ibid.*, iv. 610.

practised it. He speaks only of the ploughed field, of the mustard seed, and uses only common rustic similitudes."[33] Of studied art in his sermons there is none. And yet he is a master of the art which consists in ignoring artifice. Chrysostom, he says, was too much of the rhetorician to be a good preacher. He has eloquence without substance.[34] A training in rhetoric and dialectic is serviceable if the preacher knows how to make use of them for his purpose. In Luther's sermons both are there of their kind, and his skill in using them, and also in concealing them, is so masterly that the hearer is interested and gripped, impressed and persuaded, without noticing the art of the sermon. The effect is produced because the preacher speaks as his inborn directness dictates. "Ah, how naturally Christ speaks in His parables. Away with all rhetoric from the house of God!"[35] Osiander and Bucer are not good preachers. With all their rhetoric and their learning they do not edify the common man. Link is far more effective, because he is a master of simple illustration, after the fashion of Christ. "I must some time write a book against the clever preachers."[36] He himself does not bother about elaborate introductions or rhetorical perorations, but, as a rule, begins straightway and stops with a short exhortation, as if he had just concluded an edifying talk. He enlivens his sermons with dialogue passages—question and answer, often of an apologetic tendency, in defence of the evangelical faith against its opponents and detractors. They are full of proverbs, and pregnant sayings of his own coining, of irony and naïve humour, of drastic popular phrases and vivid, familiar illustrations.

Rhetoric in the pulpit usually amounts to nothing more than mere volubility. Volubility does not edify, though it may carry some off their feet. "When Mörlin and Medler preach, it is as if you knocked the bung out of a full barrel. There it spouts because it is full inside. But this volubility does not impress or edify, though it may delight some. It is better to speak deliberately in order that the listener may grasp the subject matter."[37] The preacher shall stick to his text. Only a fool says everything that comes into his head, and in saying much, says nothing.[38] "I choose a passage and stick to it, so that the people may tell after sermon what I was speaking about." [39] The proof of a good sermon is that the common people can take it home with them.[40] Luther himself set the example of relevant preaching, if allowance be made for his tendency at times to turn his text against the adversary of his own characteristic convictions, or make it mean what it means to him. He seizes the point of the passage of Scripture he is expounding, sets it forth in terms intelligible to the average hearer, and presses its message home. He thought out the outline of what he intended to say, and left the expression of his thoughts to the inspiration of the moment. Sometimes he was astonished to find that he had spoken as Cruciger, who took notes, reproduced the sermon, and could not understand how he had been so brief.[41] Sometimes, too, it happened that he forgot the train of thought that he had planned out, and preached a better sermon in consequence. "Our Lord God will alone be the preacher." [42] As a rule, however, he kept to his scheme, though the statement of it might be different from what he had conceived.[43] His dialectic training stood him in good stead. It not only enabled him to draw up a coherent outline, but helped him to keep closely to the train of thought which he had fixed in his mind. His general rule is, define, divide, apply.[44] Be sparing of words, but not of thought, might also be said to express his ideal of preaching. He kept his inborn "verbosity" under severe restraint in the pulpit, if not in too many of his writings. "Get up into the pulpit, open your mouth, and shut it in time." [45] "I have learned the art of concluding. When I have no more to say, I stop." [46]

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[33] "T.R.," iv. 447.

[34] *Ibid.*, iv. 50.

[35] *Ibid.*, v. 645; v. 198.

[36] *Ibid.*, iv. 478.

[37] *Ibid.*, v. 6.

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[38] "T.R.," iv. 308; v. 184.

[39] *Ibid.*, ii. 163; *cf.* iii. 210.

[40] *Ibid.*, iv. 635.

[41] *Ibid.*, iii. 42.

[42] *Ibid.*, iii. 357.

[43] *Ibid.*, iv. 135.

[44] *Ibid.*, ii. 325.

[45] *Ibid.*, iv. 692. Prædicator ascendat, operiat os, et desinat. The saying is more expressive in German, Steig flugs auf, tu's Maul auf, hör bald auf.

[46] *Ibid.*, iv. 4.

He has an exalted sense of his office. God speaks to man through the preacher. In this conviction he rates preaching—the spoken Gospel—as high as the Bible—yea, at times even higher, since it is the Word, as experienced by the speaker, under the guidance of the Spirit, and applied by the Spirit to the heart and mind of his listener, that he preaches. The preacher speaks at the command of Almighty God and as the servant of Christ.[47] "God, the creator of heaven and earth, speaks with thee through His preachers, baptizes, catechises, absolves thee through the ministry of His own sacraments. These are the words of God, not of Plato or Aristotle. It is God Himself that speaks."[48] Real preaching is thus a divine dynamic. It is because the preacher and his hearers lose sight of this fact that preaching is so feckless. "The people are lacking, inasmuch as they fail to realise that the preaching office has to do with the Word of our Lord God. They think that it is only the parson's word, as under the Papacy. Therefore, they fear (as they say) that we want to become papist again, and wish merely to lord it over them. We ministers and preachers are also lacking, inasmuch as we ourselves do not regard our teaching as the very Word of God. For when the people humble themselves before us, we very soon begin to play the tyrant. This is now the trouble, which has always been in the world, that the hearers are afraid of the tyranny of the preachers, and the preachers always seek to play the god over their hearers."[49]

Since God Himself speaks to the people, preaching has rightly taken the place of the old ceremonial as the central part of divine service.[50] Hence the tremendous responsibility that rests on the preacher and the need for faithfulness and fearlessness in the delivery of his message. He must instruct, rebuke, denounce in God's place, and as one who is responsible for the salvation of the sinner. He should do so, not as lord over the soul, but as God's mouthpiece. He will, indeed, get little thanks for his pains. But he should rather incur the ill-will of the sinner than share in his damnation by shirking this imperative obligation. In his own sermons

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[47] "T.R.," vi. 340 f.

[48] *Ibid.*, iv. 531.

[49] *Ibid.*, vi. 253.

[50] *Ibid.*, i. 409.

Luther could speak plainly enough in drastic Saxon to gross sinners, if, at the same time, he could address the penitent, the careworn, the afflicted in the kindliest and most comforting terms. In his capacity as God's messenger, the preacher must concern himself not merely with the individual; he must constitute himself the guardian of public morality in the discharge of his duty as moral censor, and hesitate not to denounce and condemn public abuses and their authors, though he may not lay down the law in purely political and economic questions; he must remind the magistracy of their duty and challenge their delinquencies. "Asked whether the magistracy is to be reprehended, 'Assuredly,' replied the Doctor. 'For although it is the ordinance of God, He has nevertheless reserved to Himself His own right to reprove their vices. Even their purely political wrongdoing is to be reprehended, such as their connivance with excessive usury at the expense of the poor people.'"[51] How Luther himself discharged this duty as a publicist we already know sufficiently from his writings. His sermons also afford ample testimony to his insistent and fearless striving as preacher to establish and vindicate the kingdom of God among men. As publicist, he might tell the peasants that the Gospel has nothing to do with worldly things. It inculcates the Cross, suffering submission to wrong, renunciation of life and goods.[52] As preacher, he none the less realised the obligation to bring its influence into the whole of life.[53] To discharge this function effectively the preacher must be a warrior as well as a pastor. He must know how to assert himself. "He must have teeth in his jaws."[54] He must, too, be a man of high character, of clean heart, and upright spirit.[55] He ought to know the world in order to learn how to counter its wickedness as well as deal with burdened souls. He should not be brought up in a monastery, as he had been, out of touch with real life, living in an imaginary world, naïvely conceiving it to be so pious that it would rush to welcome the Gospel. How different had he found the reality to be.[56]

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[51] "T.R.," v. 32. [52] "Werke," xviii. 321; *cf.* lii. 268.

[53] On Luther's attitude to public life, see Holl's essay, "Die Kulturbedeutung der Reformation," "Aufsätze," 468 f.

[54] "T.R.," ii. 236. Contionator debet esse bellator et pastor. Er muss zeen im Maul haben.

[55] *Ibid.*, v. 254.

As preacher as well as professor, his grand theme is Christ. *Prædicamus Christum*—" We preach Christ," is how he describes his preaching.[57] To the question, What to preach ? Luther's answer is, " The Gospel." [58] What the Gospel meant for him we have already sufficiently discovered [59] and need not enlarge further on it here. As we have also seen, he claimed that this Gospel was something new—a very different message from that prevailing under the Papacy.[60] In what respect it was new we are also sufficiently informed. The preaching of the Gospel has a threefold object—to overthrow the conscience ; to raise it up ; to educate it by the exposition of the Word.[61] Preaching the Gospel is thus a complex business. It is multifarious as life. It includes character as well as doctrine, the works of faith in ordinary life as well as saving faith in the redeeming work of Christ, which is its root and inspiration. As Luther preached it, it was an arresting and convulsing message, which it is difficult for us, who are accustomed to it, adequately to realise or describe. Perhaps we can get near to the realisation of it if we try to envisage the revolutionary movement which this preacher, by the power of his spoken and printed word, started in the pulpit of the parish church at Wittenberg, and which speedily burst forth beyond the walls of this otherwise insignificant town on the Elbe, over the length and breadth of the empire into many other lands, gathering hurricane force as it went, casting down the decaying fabric of the mediæval Church, and clearing the way for a new creation. Out of this new creation has sprung the mighty fabric, the immense influence of the modern reformed Churches in all the continents of the earth, the beginnings of which may justifiably be traced to that titanic preacher of the Word in the Wittenberg pulpit.

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[56] " T.R.," ii. 178 ; iii. 229.

[57] *Ibid.*, ii. 143.

[58] " Werke," xlvii. 455.

[59] See, for instance, the section on the New Evangelism, " Luther and the Reformation," iii. 61 f.

[60] " T.R.," i. 573.

[61] *Ibid.*, iv. 479.

Judged by the effects of his preaching, assuredly the greatest of preachers since the Apostle Paul. In this marvellous achievement, the personality of the man counts as much as his message. A marvellous combination of creative religious conviction, of abounding and defying faith, of strength of will and character, of torrential speech alive with the prophetic fire—these are the things that told in the Wittenberg pulpit and still make their dynamic felt in the world, even if the taste of the age changes with the advance of knowledge and culture. Apart from the personality that imparted to them this dynamic, Luther's sermons may not always appeal to the intellect or satisfy the culture of our day, though we cannot read the best of them with indifference or mere critical aloofness. As preached by a man of less forceful calibre, they might fail to crowd the pews of a modern church. Even Luther did not always enthral. There are numerous complaints in the sermons and the "Table Talk" about lack of interest in the evangelical preaching, of lukewarmness in the cause of the Gospel and hostility towards the preachers, of the inconsistency of profession with practice.[62] His weekly sermons in the parish church, when he acted as Bugenhagen's substitute in 1537-39, for instance, were not always well attended. In the winter of 1530, for reasons that are not clear, he was so out of touch with his congregation that he actually abstained for several months from preaching.[63] "The nearer to Rome, the worse Christians," he says, in speaking of his Wittenberg audience. Like most preachers, he sometimes came down from the pulpit thoroughly unsatisfied with his performance and disgusted with himself, though it also happened on such occasions that he would be told that he had never preached better. *Per contra*, it would also happen that when he was most satisfied with himself, he had given least satisfaction to others.[64] Moreover, the hearer might relish the sermon, but hesitate to put his hand into his pocket and give for the cause of the Gospel.[65] No wonder that Luther sometimes gets tired of preaching the Gospel of grace, and threatens to preach the common law (*Sachsenspiegel*) for the correction of evangelical evil-doers who practise Christianity with usury, robbery, and stealing. Luther, as in the case of Christ or Paul, did not succeed in preaching his hearers up to the level of his own ideals. He failed, in fact, at times to preach himself up to his own standard, or reflect in his own life in some respects the Gospel ideal, inasmuch as the Gospel is always far in advance of the man and the age. The failure as well as the success of both the man and his age is patent enough, but the marvellous results are there none the less. Luther and the Reformation, the preacher and his achievement, are the concrete evidence of them.[66]

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[62] On such complaints in the Sermons, see Werdermann, "Luther's Wittenberger Gemeinde," 25-26 (1929).

[63] See the letter of the Elector John, remonstrating with him over his refusal to preach, Enders, vii. 221, 18th Jan. 1530.

[64] "T.R.," i. 434; iv. 446.

IV. Luther in His Catechisms and Hymns

Next to the translation of the Bible, Luther made a sterling contribution to the practical religious life in his Catechisms and Hymns. In his own estimation, the Catechisms, along with the "De Servo Arbitrio," were the best things he had written.[1] Both the Large and the Small Catechism appeared in the spring of 1529, and were preceded in the previous year by a series of sermons which formed the basis of them.[2] They were intended for the instruction of the unlettered people in the essentials of the evangelical faith.[3] In this he was only following the example of the mediæval Church, which, in this way, sought to instruct the people in the rudiments of the faith. But whilst drawing the form of this instruction from this source, he imparted to its contents his own evangelical teaching. The visitation of the electoral territory had shown the clamant necessity of providing such instruction, and the thought of meeting this crying lack had been borne in upon him years before. The germ of the Catechism appears already in the "Short Form of the Ten Commandments"[4] of 1520 and the "Little Prayer Book"[5] of 1522 (*Betbüchlin*). "The deplorable need which I recently observed as a visitor," he writes in the introduction to the Small Catechism, "has forced me to draw up this Catechism in concise and simple form. God help us, much misery have I seen, inasmuch as the common man knows nothing at all of Christian teaching, especially in the villages, and, alas, many of the parsons are very unskilful and unfit in teaching. The people are Christians only in name, know not the Lord's Prayer, nor the Creed, nor the Ten Commandments, live like the very beasts, and, despite the possession of the Gospel, have only learned too well to misuse their freedom."[6] For this deplorable ignorance he holds the bishops, who have neglected their office so shamefully, responsible.[7] Nor does he spare some of the evangelical preachers who have grown up under this vicious régime, and who are either more concerned for the belly than for the spiritual needs of their flocks, or regard this part of their function as too elementary to merit their attention. Now that they have been freed from the burdensome formalities of the old system, they also are far too inclined to abuse their freedom and neglect their duty in

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[65] "T.R.," ii. 101, and see Werdermann, 32 f.

[66] There is no exhaustive treatise, even in German, on Luther's preaching. Werdermann, "Luther's Wittenberger Gemeinde," just published, has dealt with a series of 194 sermons, delivered between 1528 and 1532, as collected and modernised by Buchwald, "Predigten D. Martin Luther's" (1925-26). This is, however, only a mere fragment of his preaching output, and a systematic research of this vast material is still a desideratum. The man to undertake it would be Buchwald, the chief editor of the Sermons in the Weimar edition of Luther's works and an unrivalled expert in this field. The introductions to the various volumes in this edition by him and others are largely bibliographical and philological. The accounts of Luther's preaching in the homiletical text-books and histories of preaching are very inadequate. See also Gogarten, "Luther's Predigten" (1927).

[1] Enders, xi. 247.

[2] These sermons, edited by Buchwald, are given in vol. xxx., Pt. I.,

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of the Weimar edition of his works (1910). The Catechisms are given in the same volume, edited with valuable introductions by O. Albrecht, with the assistance of I. Luther and O. Brenner. See also Buchwald, "Die Entstehung der Katechismen Luther's" (1894); Cohrs, art. in "Herzog-Hauck Encyclopædie"; and Albrecht, "Katechismenstudien" in "Theologische Studien und Kritiken" (1907).

[3] Enders, vii. 43. Modo in parando catechismo pro rudibus paganis versor, 15th Jan. 1529. The word catechism includes both Catechisms.

[4] "Werke," vii. 204 f.

[5] *Ibid.*, x., Pt. II., 375 f.

[6] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. I., 264-266.

[7] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. I., 266.

this respect. They have no adequate sense of the spiritual benefit to be derived even by the learned from the daily exercise of themselves and their flocks in such elementary verities, as he has found in his own personal experience. "This I can say for myself, I also am a doctor and preacher, yea, as learned and experienced as all those who profess to be so superior and self-confident. I make myself a child, who has to learn the Catechism and read and repeat it word for word every morning and whenever I have time. And yet I cannot make so much headway as I should like, and must ever remain a child and a pupil of the Catechism, and also do so readily." [8] "I beg, therefore, all Christians, and especially the pastors and preachers, not to become doctors too soon, and imagine that they know everything, but strive daily to exercise and busy themselves with reading the Catechism, and assiduously guard themselves from the contagion of security and ignorance." [9] The pastor's office is no sinecure nowadays. It is very different from what it was under the Pope—involving much trouble and toil, danger and trial, little reward and gratitude from the world.[10] Hence the importance of this instruction in the elements of the faith which is meant primarily for the children and simple people, and also as a manual for the heads of families, as well as the preachers and schoolmasters, to enable them to teach their children and households once a week at least, and thus fit them for the use of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Supper.[11]

For Luther the word Catechism means specifically the subject-matter of such instruction, orally imparted to those whose knowledge of it is imperfect or non-existent, rather than a specific book or method of teaching, though he also uses the word in this sense. The Large Catechism, in fact, takes the form of an exposition of these elements, and only the small one is couched in the form of question and answer.[12] For him such instruction was both indispensable in itself and as a means of furthering the Reformation movement among the people, especially the rising generation. "The reformers," says Albrecht, "recognised the great importance of this kind of instruction, and gave it a new and specific development. For them everything depended on the apprehension of the Word of God and, therefore, also on this catechetical instruction which contained 'the abbreviated Word' (*Verbum abbreviatum*). The future of the Reformation depended on their success in impregnating the youth with the kernel and the right understanding of this divine Word."[13] The Catechisms were, in fact, a set attempt to popularise and propagate the Reformation. We might call them an anticipation of the later Sunday School. Luther realised the importance of getting at the children through the parents, pastors, and schoolmasters.

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[8] Preface to the Large Catechism, "Werke," xxx., Pt. I., 125-126.

[9] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. I., 128.

[10] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. I., 276 f.

[11] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. I., 129-130.

[12] On the meaning of the word as used by Luther and his fellow-reformers, see Albrecht's Introduction, "Werke," xxx., Pt. I., 448.

Such instruction had been too much neglected in the old Church. "The children received, indeed, religious instruction in the home—as Luther and his fellow-reformers gratefully acknowledged—and religion was taught as part of the school curriculum, where schools existed. In the confessional the priest tested the religious knowledge of his youthful penitents. But before Luther there were no special catechetical services for the young. There was also, as far as we know, a total lack of handbooks in which the elements of the faith were expounded for the benefit of the children. Only the heretical Waldenses and a few of the humanists anticipated him in this respect."[14] Luther claims to have supplied what the Church had neglected to provide—a compendium of the evangelical faith for the rising generation. He even goes the length of maintaining that in the old Church no teacher had understood these elements as they were now set forth in the Catechisms. "There was no doctor in the whole world who knew the whole Catechism—*i.e.*, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Creed, to say nothing of understanding and teaching them as they are now, God be praised, taught, and learned, even by young children. In proof of this I appeal to the books of both theologians and jurists. If anyone can properly learn any point of the

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[13] "Werke," xxx., Pt. I., 445.

[14] Albrecht, xxx., Pt. I., 459.

Catechism out of these books, I will let myself be broken on the wheel." [15] He even maintained that hitherto no instruction in the sacraments had been imparted.[16] What he evidently means is that such instruction as was given was misleading and inadequate, compared with the evangelical teaching of the Catechisms on the subject.

Whilst thus emphasising the neglect and other shortcomings of previous catechetical instruction, he followed the traditional method in the choice of the subject-matter of it. This comprised the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacraments of Baptism and the Supper, Confession, to which he added, in the Small Catechism, morning and evening family prayers, graces before and after meals, and Scripture passages for all classes. But what he borrowed he simplified, vitalised, and revolutionised in accordance with his religious experience and evangelical teaching, and adapted to the needs of a new age. Whilst his revulsion from the old Church breaks out in the Large Catechism, the controversial tone is eschewed in the Small,[17] which is a model of simple, concise statement, admirably adapted to the comprehension of the young and the ignorant.

The instruction thus provided was obligatory on all Christians. Without such knowledge, as tested by the pastors and supplemented by confession, voluntarily made, no one was admitted to Baptism and the Lord's Supper.[18] Those who neglect or refuse it are liable to civil pains and penalties. Not only are they excluded from the Supper and refused Baptism for their children; they are denied all social rights and privileges, and are to be warned that the civil authority will banish them the land.[19] At the same time, he rather inconsistently disclaims the desire to force anyone in matters of faith, and attempts to harmonise the difference between obligation and free choice by distinguishing between the spheres of the State and the Church. Every one, as a member of the State and the community, is to be compelled to know what is right and wrong and to observe the laws of the State, and for refusal to do so may be called to account. On the other hand, the pastors are to eschew all recourse to force, and strive by their insistent teaching and preaching to bring the people of their own free will to seek instructions and partake of the sacrament. If they will not come, they shall hand them over to the devil. He does not add, in accordance with the practice of the mediæval Church, to the civil power for punishment. But the retaliation, which the heads of families and the magistrates are empowered to inflict, comes practically, if not theoretically, to the same thing. At the same time, he has in view not merely the interest of the evangelical faith; he emphasises the practical character of this instruction, which was to further not only evangelical orthodoxy, but practical Christian morality, and to be adapted to meet and counter the special failings of every class of the community.[20]

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[15] "Werke," xxx., Pt. II., 301 ; *cf.* 346-347.

[16] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. I., 212.

[17] See Söderblom in "Luther in Oecumenischer Sicht," 65-66 (1929).

[18] "Werke," xxx., Pt. I., 237.

[19] *Ibid.*, xxx., Pt. I., 270.

Evangelical piety finds in Luther's hymns an appealing expression and a compelling inspiration. When he began to burst into religious song is a disputed question. Up to 1905, when Spitta published his work on this subject,[21] it was generally assumed that the first of his religious poems was that evoked by the death of the two martyrs of the evangelical faith in the Netherlands in July 1523 ("Ein neues Lied wir heben an"). Shortly after we find him expressing, in his preface to the "Formula Missæ," his desire to introduce German hymns and Psalms into the service of the Mass,[22] and exhorting Spalatin to co-operate in this task.[23] The letter to Spalatin further shows that he himself had already begun to supply this lack in the reformed service, and was devoting to this end the poetic gift which these martyrdoms had struck into activity. It is, indeed, possible that he had exercised this gift from a much earlier period, and Spitta contends that this was the case. He holds that the awakening of Luther's poetic gift originated long before the introduction of hymns in the vernacular into the evangelical worship. He thinks that it goes back even to his Erfurt days, and that from these days onwards he periodically gave expression to his personal religious experience in verse, without any thought of making liturgical use of these effusions. It is, he maintains, impossible to assume that Luther only became a poet in his fortieth year, and that throughout the long years of his spiritual struggle and his conflict with the Papacy his poetic genius was in abeyance. The conclusion is, however, by no means self-evident, and the authentic historic evidence does not tend to support it. On the contrary, this evidence shows that the poetic gift was called forth by the tragic fate of the two members of his own Order in the Netherlands, and that the growing sense of the need of a reformed hymnology impelled him, about the same time, to make trial of his gift in the attempt to supply this need.

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[20] "Werke," xxx., Pt. I., 272 f.

[21] "'Ein feste Burg est unser Gott,' Die Lieder Luther's in ihrer Bedeutung für das Evangelische Kirchenlied."

[22] "Werke," xii. 218.

[23] Enders, iv. 273.

The first fruits was the splendid pæan of evangelical faith in "Nun freut euch lieben Christen gemein," which, along with some of the Psalms in verse and other pieces, found a place in the first evangelical hymn-books in 1524. Of the eight which appeared at Nürnberg in this year, four were composed by him. To the collections which appeared at Erfurt (two in number) and Wittenberg in the same year, he contributed as many as twenty additional hymns, raising the number of his contributions to these early collections to twenty-four. In subsequent years he wrote twelve more, bringing the total up to thirty-six. Even before these early collections were published, single hymns were being printed and were circulated among the people.[24]

To the Wittenberg collections he contributed a series of prefaces in which he emphasises the value of music in the worship of God. He himself was an ardent lover of the art, and practised it both vocally and instrumentally. He valued it in itself as well as an aid to worship, as his preface to Rhau's "Symphoniæ Jucundæ" (1538) amply shows.[25] Music, he avers in this preface, is innate in all creation as well as the human soul. Its magical power over the soul no words can adequately express. A great part of revelation was given in song, or under the inspiration of the music of the harp. It is the greatest inspiration Godwards of the human heart. The human voice is God's instrument, and in its wondrous capacity of musical expression, technically developed, we recognise "the great and perfect wisdom of God in His wonderful gift of music." He, therefore, commends the practice of it to every Christian, and especially the young, for whom it is the best means of exercising themselves in virtue and driving away evil thoughts and evil company. On the other hand, "he who has no love of, or delight in, song, and is not moved by such charming sounds, must truly be a gross blockhead, who is unworthy to hear such melody, and should have no other music but that of donkeys, dogs, and pigs."[26] In these hymns, he tells us in the preface to the collection of 1524, his aim has been to further the Gospel and proclaim Christ the Saviour. In the case of youth especially, he has sought to supply it with something to take the place of the amatory or trivial songs to which they are addicted. Not that he would displace the arts in favour of the Gospel alone, as some high-fliers would wish. He only desires to make them, and especially the art of music, the means of serving Him from whom these gifts come.[27] Christian worship ought to be a thing of joy, in contrast to that of the Old Testament, with its sacrificial cultus grudgingly rendered by the people. The Gospel is a message of gladness, of deliverance from sin, death, and the devil. "Whoever earnestly believes this cannot be otherwise than joyful, and sing and say it that others may hear and be drawn to it."[28] Hence the joyous defiance of death and hell that rings throughout these sacred songs.

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[24] The hymns are given in "Werke," xxxv., edited with exhaustive introductions by Lucke, supplemented by O. Albrecht (1923). See also Knoke, "Zur Geschichte der Evangelischen Gesangbücher," "Theol. Studien und Kritiken" (1918), 228 f. and 307 f.

He has no hesitation in borrowing freely from the hymnology of the old Church, which he appreciates highly, whilst rejecting its religious ceremonial and transforming it in accordance with God's Word.[29] Münzer had preceded him in the introduction of German hymns into the reformed service, and though he objected to this sectarian departure, he was quick to see the advantage to be derived from it and to enrich the evangelical service with a series of hymns in the vernacular. A considerable number of them are free versions of some of the Psalms or the old Latin hymns. From the Psalms he derived "Aus tiefer not schrei ich zu dir" (Ps. 130), "Ach Gott vom Himmel sieh darein" (Ps. 12), "Es wollt uns Gott gnädig sein" (Ps. 67), "Wär Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit" (Ps. 124), etc; "Mitten wir im Leben sind" is his version of the old "Media Vita in Morte sumus"; "Wir glauben all an einen Gott" is based on the "Credo"; "Mit Fried und Freud fahr ich dahin" is the "Nunc Dimittis"; "Jesaia dem Propheten das geschah" is the Lutheran "Sanctus"; "Herr Gott dich loben wir" the Lutheran "Te Deum"; "Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich" is a free rendering of "Da Pacem Domine." The three nativity hymns, "Seist du Jesus Christ," "Nun komm der Heiden Heiland," and "Christum wir sollen loben schon," are built on similar old hymns in German and Latin. Similarly in the case of the Easter hymn, "Christ lag in Todes Banden," and in the Whitsuntide hymns, "Komm Gott Schöpfer Heiliger geist" (Veni Creator Spiritus), "Nun bitten wir den Heil'gen geist," "Komm Heiliger geist Herre Gott." "Jesus Christus unser Heiland" is Luther's "improvement" of Hus's hymn on the Eucharist.

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[25] "Werke," l. 368 f.

[26] *Ibid.*, l. 373.

[27] *Ibid.*, xxxv. 474-475.

[28] *Ibid.*, xxxv. 476-477.

Whilst he thus borrowed and adapted the themes of a considerable number of the old hymns, he imparted to them a striking originality, both of content and expression, which transformed them into the poetic vehicle of his own religious thought and experience,—in the case of "Mit Fried und Freud fahr ich dahin," for example, the rendering of which far surpasses all previous or contemporary attempts.[30] In all of them the evangelical touch, the distinctive Lutheran personal note are unmistakable. Equally so in those in which he gives independent expression to his own religious thought and emotion: "Nun freut euch lieben Christen gemein"; "Ein feste Burg est unser Gott"; "Jesus Christus unser Heiland, der den Tod überwand"; "Gott der Vater wohn uns bei"; "Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her"; "Erhalt uns Herr bei deinem Wort"; "Vom Himmel kam der Engelschaar"; "Vater unser im Himmelreich" (his version of the Lord's Prayer); "Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam" (baptismal hymn).

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[29] "Werke," xxxv. 479-480.

[30] Lucke, *ibid.*, xxxv. 152.

Generally speaking, the dominant note of the hymns is the redemption through Christ from sin, death, and hell, with the corollary of man's sinfulness and moral impotence under the power of sin. Hence the emphasis on Christ's sacrifice and the shedding of His blood for sin. Whilst this "blood theology," along with the belief in hell fire for the unbeliever, is rather crassly obtruded, the love of God in Christ finds moving expression, and the triumphant note of confidence in God's redeeming love breaks out again and again. At the same time, his poetic feeling is rather handicapped by the didactic purpose of expressing his distinctive theology in verse. His conception of the real presence is, for instance, crudely reflected, and he only succeeds in rhyming his view of baptism in rather a forced fashion. Where he excels in beautiful and touching expression is in depicting his personal experience of God's love and goodness in Christ. In the version of the "Te Deum" he also catches the grand ring of the original, and to the hymn on the Church ("Sie ist mir lieb die werte Magd") he succeeds in imparting the spirit and rhythm of a folk-song. The story of the nativity in "Vom Himmel hoch" is dramatically and tenderly set forth. With effective directness he invokes the divine help in "Erhalt uns Herr bei deinem Wort," which is aimed at the arch-enemies of Christendom, the Pope and the Turk. In his version of the Lord's Prayer a simple, trustful piety is finely expressed. In the grandest of all his hymns, "Ein feste Burg," he attains the summit of an invincible faith in God in defiance of the devil and a world of enemies. In this magnificent challenge of the foe, we have the thrilling manifestation of the spirit that carried him and the Reformation to triumph in the struggle with the might and majesty of Rome. It is unquestionably a masterpiece of religious emotion, into which he put, as Lucke expresses it, "the quintessence of his life."

It was evidently written at some great crisis of his career, which Dietrich, Grössler, and Spitta think was the journey to the Diet of Worms in 1521. The situation which faced him at Oppenheim, on the eve of his entrance to Worms, certainly seems to fit the assumption that this battle hymn is the expression of his fixed determination to appear before the Emperor and the Diet, whatever the consequences. The supporters of this view, Grössler and Spitta, appeal besides to the testimony of Seidel and Pauli in the late sixteenth century, which explicitly ascribes its origin to this situation, and Spitta supplements this testimony by citing passages from Luther's early works, which he thinks confirm it. But this testimony amounts to little more than a late assumption, and leaves unanswered the pertinent question why, if it was already written in 1521, it did not appear in the Luther hymn-books before, at earliest, the year 1528. In the face of this cardinal objection, Lucke and the majority of recent authorities place its origin in the years 1527-28, between the two Diets of Spires, when the menace of the imperial suppression of the Reformation seemed very ominous, and the situation would thus equally well suit the circumstances of its composition.[31] The assumption that it was written at Coburg in 1530 during the Diet of Augsburg, which has also had its protagonists, is ruled out by the fact that it was already included in the Wittenberg hymn-book of 1529.[32]

Another disputed question is whether Luther himself composed any of the melodies for his hymns? That he was a lover of music and enthusiastically practised the art has already been noted. As a student at Erfurt he played the lute, and he continued later to cultivate it. Choral singing, in which he joined, was a favourite relaxation in his home at Wittenberg, and music was among the themes frequently discussed in the "Table Talk."[33] It is not surprising,

[31] See the detailed discussion of the question by Lucke, "Werke," xxxv. 185 f.

[32] Lucke, "Werke," xxxv. 201-202.

[33] See, for instance, "T.R.," i. 490, and many other passages.

therefore, that the tendency was formerly to ascribe to him a large number of the tunes to which the hymns were sung. More recently the tendency has been to minimise the number, and some hymnologists, like Bäumker, have denied him any originality as a composer, and have maintained that he borrowed, and at most adapted, from the existing Church music. Certain it is, on the testimony of his friend, the musician, John Walther, that he composed the tunes for the two hymns in the service of the Mass—"Sanctus" and "Credo"—which he turned into German verse. Whether any, and how many, of the other hymns were set to music by him is still an open question.

CHAPTER X

NATIONAL AND EXTRA-NATIONAL INFLUENCE

I. National Influence

For Protestant Germany Luther has ever been a national hero. He stands pre-eminent in its appreciation, even in the company of an Arminius, a Barbarossa, a Frederick II., and a Bismarck. He appeals to the soul and imagination of German Protestants as does no other national figure. "There has never been a German," judges Döllinger, "who so instinctively understood his countrymen and who in return has been so thoroughly understood, nay, whose spirit, I should say, has been so completely imbibed by his nation, as this Augustinian friar. The mind and spirit of the Germans were under his control, like the lyre in the hands of a musician."[1]

One reason of this arresting appeal lies in the fact that he himself was German to the core in character, temperament, feeling. He was patriot as well as prophet, the champion of the national spirit in its revulsion from the oppression and exploitation of an alien ecclesiastical régime as well as the exponent of a new theology. It was, at first at least, the note of antagonism to Italian arrogance and corrupt domination that rallied so large a part of Germany to his side. As a good German he resented and revolted against the Italian contempt for Germany and German civilisation,[2] and his Germanism undoubtedly contributed to open the hearts of his countrymen for his prophetic message and mission. In hurling defiance to Rome, in the presence of the Emperor and the assembled magnates at Worms, he gave resounding expression to the national spirit as well as to the imperative voice of conscience and religious conviction. From this point of view, the revolt against the papal authority was the revival, in altered circumstances, of the old conflict between the empire and the Papacy. Worms was the counterfoil to Canossa, and this revision of Canossa, in vindication of the national spirit against the arrogant spirit of a corrupt and oppressive Ultramontanism, has enthroned the daring rebel in the love and veneration of millions of his fellow-countrymen from that day to this.

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[1] Quoted by Geffcken in *The Contemporary Review*, 1884. "The whole nation," wrote Vergerio, "holds Luther for a very holy prophet," "Nuntiaturberichte," i. 545.

[2] "T.R.," ii. 48 f.; iii. 668.

Luther the patriot, the embodiment of the national spirit, is, however, but a subordinate part of Luther the Reformer. The controlling inspiration and motive of his reforming mission was religious, not merely political, as in the case of a Hutten. It was as the prophet of a distinctive conception of religion and the religious life that, as we have seen, he imposed his genius and his personality on his age, and mightily influenced the trend of modern history. In him the forces making in the late mediæval age for a new order of things in Church and State found their *coryphæus*. He incarnated in his dynamic personality the reaction from the papal absolutism and the mediæval religious system, which had been gathering force in the previous two centuries, but had failed to effect a reformation of the constitution, doctrine, and practical life of the Church. What the reforming Councils, Wiclif, Hus, and many other pre-Reformation reformers had attempted, he brought to fruition in Germany and contributed to effect in other lands as well. He was the dynamic protagonist of the idea of the national Church in opposition to the papal claim to a universal, absolute monarchy, if not to the historic conception of the Catholic Church as the generality of Christian believers. Whilst firmly maintaining this conception in the religious sense (*Die Christenheit*), he rejected and overthrew the papal domination as an unwarranted, corrupt, and oppressive usurpation. He dethroned the Pope and the hierarchy throughout a large part of Germany, and brought into existence a Church independent of Rome and differing from it in its distinctive doctrines, worship, and organisation.

He failed, indeed, to carry the whole empire with him in his revolt against the Roman "Antichrist," to unite all "his dear Germans" within the pale of the German Reformed Church. The majority of the Diet of Worms, whilst approving his stand against papal corruption and oppression, hesitated to back up the condemned heretic, and allowed the Emperor to decree his outlawry. The idea of a national Church, independent of Rome and subject to the jurisdiction of a German Primate and a German ecclesiastical Council, ultimately proved unrealisable, and Luther was fain, in accordance with the dominant trend towards particularism, to substitute the territorial Church in alliance with, and practically in subordination to, the territorial prince. Even in this limited form, the transformation of the existing order in Church and State, operated in a large part of the empire by the dynamic will and intellect of the Wittenberg monk, was an extraordinary achievement.

He failed, indeed, to rally the whole empire behind him in his striving to establish an independent national Church, and his failure,[3] by disrupting the old religious unity, might aggravate the tendency to political disunion already operative in the imperial Constitution. This failure was inevitable in view of the impossibility of squaring religious conviction with political expediency and the antagonisms which religious conviction tends to arouse and exacerbate. As it was, the establishment of the territorial Church over a large part of Germany was a profound modification of the old ecclesiastical order, and was to regulate the ecclesiastical system of Lutheran Germany down to the German Revolution of 1919. The territorial Church might, too, be lacking in the vitalising element of self-determination and take on the character of a State institution. It, nevertheless, served, in its all too prescriptive fashion, to nurture the distinctive German evangelical piety which took its inspiration from the inexhaustible source of Luther's devotional spirit and didactic writings. "Now God has begun to speak German," said Agricola of the work of the great Reformer, and the divine effluence of his German translation of the Bible, his German Catechisms, his German hymns, his German liturgy, has been a great force in the nurture of the religious life and the formation of the character of Lutheran Germany. The operation of this divine effluence was necessarily hampered by the conditions of the time. In the embryonic period of the Reformation, the rampant demoralisation in consequence of the agelong corruption of the Roman Church, the cataclysm of theological controversy, the sudden rebound from the formal regulation of the religious life to the liberty of the Christian man—imperfectly understood or misapplied—might, as we have seen, react only too adversely on the moral and spiritual life of Luther's day. Nevertheless, God had begun to speak German, and the vernacular Bible, the evangelical worship, catechisms, and sermons ultimately bore sterling fruit in the moral and religious uplift of the people, the God-fearing atmosphere, the ordered dutifulness of the German Protestant home and community. Of immeasurable value for the nation has thus been the influence of Luther, in this respect, on the moral and spiritual life of Lutheran Germany.

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[3] On the limitations of Luther's work as a national reformer, see Scheel, "Die nationale und übernationale Bedeutung Dr Martin Luther's," an amplified lecture, delivered on a recent occasion at Eisenach. He refers to the question, sometimes discussed by German historians, of Luther's failure to create a united Germany on the basis of a Reformation, which would have secured the support of the whole empire. Some of these discussions are highly fanciful—the suggestion, for instance, that by recanting at Worms, and thus gaining the support of the distinctively practical reformers, he would have united Germany in a national reformation movement, instead of disrupting it. To have recanted in deference to political expediency would have been to discredit himself and destroy his influence. In any case, Luther could not possibly have anticipated Bismarck. His genius was formed in an altogether different mould. The Lutheran movement was not responsible for the lack of German unity, though, by splitting the empire into two antagonistic religious parties, it tended to perpetuate it. The root of this disunion lay in the imperial Constitution and the trend to political particularism. To assume that, as a merely practical reformer, he would have effected the overthrow of the corrupt papal régime, and at the same time reformed the Constitution of the empire, is naïve indeed in the face of the actual conditions of the time. This was the part vainly attempted by Hutten. On Hutten in this capacity, see Flake, "Ulrich von Hutten" (1929).

Outside the purely religious sphere Luther's influence has left a deep impression on Protestant Germany. Not, it may be, with beneficent effects in some respects. In the political sphere, apart from the deliverance from the papal régime, his influence went to the strengthening of the power of the territorial prince at the expense both of the establishment of an effective central Government and the rights of the subject. The Lutheran Reformation contributed to perpetuate and to intensify the tendency towards the princely autocracy and the territorial particularism, which had been taking shape and acquiring strength in the later Middle Age. He was the protagonist of princely rule by the grace of God and the absolute submission of the subject to the existing political order, though he was, at the same time, the fearless and trenchant critic of the abuses of princely rule. He failed, too, as we have seen, to make the Reformation the means of a far-reaching social reform, in accordance with the legitimate aspiration of the masses for the abolition of serfdom, though he contended for an improved social system, and lifted up his voice against the economic and social evils of the time, and made the care of the poor a cardinal duty of the Reformed Church. His main concern was with religion, not with politics or sociology, and in the actual political and social conditions of sixteenth-century Germany, it was beyond his capacity to be at once the Reformer of the State and society as well as of the Church and religion. The Lutheran Reformation tended, in fact, only to perpetuate, not to revolutionise, the existing political and social order.

On the other hand, the religious principles which he enunciated and strove to vindicate against the dominant Roman ecclesiasticism were fraught with far-reaching effects for the future as well as the present. In the earlier period of conflict with Rome he was the champion of an emancipation movement of immense potential efficacy. He stood for the rights of conscience and reason, for freedom of thought, for toleration against an absolute external authority over the individual soul and conscience. Even if he himself did not adequately perceive the far-reaching scope of this principle, and, in his later conservative and reactionary period, failed consistently to carry out its implications, the ferment of thought which he evoked tended to make the

Reformation the harbinger of a larger freedom. It inspired others, who owed the reforming impulse to him, to make good his deficiencies both of logic and of active leadership. He might strive to regulate and narrow the reform movement within the limit of his own dogmatic convictions, in opposition to the larger development which was inherent in his own principle of liberty. But, though he might retard, he could not ultimately prevent, this development. It was not given even to Luther to prescribe the future of the movement which he started. His principle of freedom, even in the religious sphere, was capable of a far wider application than the apprehension of any one mind, however creative and commanding. The truth that genius discovers is ever greater than the genius of the discoverer.

In its essence, Protestantism was a bigger thing than its great sixteenth-century creator could grasp.[4] It involved the fact of progress—intellectual as well as religious. Wherever its spirit was moulded by the humanist ideal—its great counterpart in the intellectual sphere—it was already in the sixteenth century giving vent to this inherent progressive tendency. Luther himself, however inimical to the free exercise of reason, was the advocate of a liberal education on humanist lines, even if only as the handmaid of his own theology. The endeavour to introduce the humanist leaven into school and university instruction, in which he co-operated with the humanist Melanchthon, in opposition to the old scholastic spirit and method of education, was fraught with big consequences for the future of Protestantism. The founding of high schools like those of Nürnberg and Magdeburg, and universities like those of Marburg, Tübingen, and Königsberg,[5] was a promise of the larger intellectual life in which the Reformation was to eventuate. We may, with Troeltsch, ascribe these consequences to the influence of the eighteenth-century illumination, which was the direct fruit of the Renaissance rather than the Reformation. At the same time, this theory only expresses a partial truth. It overlooks the immense service rendered to civilisation and religious and, in part at least, intellectual liberty by the Reformation, as represented by the Protestants of England, Scotland, the Netherlands, and France, and later the United States, in their struggle to vindicate political, individual, and ecclesiastical rights against absolute or would-be absolute rulers. This progressive movement was the outcome of forces which were launched on their historic career when Luther championed the indefeasible rights of conscience and reason against Roman ecclesiastical absolutism, and challenged and overthrew this absolutism in a large part of Germany.

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[4] Troeltsch overlooks this fact in confining Protestantism to the Lutheran and Calvinistic form of it, and denying the right of its more advanced wing to be included in the movement; also ignoring too much Luther's own root principle which led to the emergence of this advanced wing. "Protestantism and Progress," 43 f., Eng. trans. by Montgomery (1912).

[5] See Roth, "Der Einfluss des Humanismus und der Reformation auf das gleichzeitige Erziehungs und Schulwesen" (1898).

To this struggle for civil and individual rights the Germany of Luther contributed little. It is only the other day that Germany, by force of circumstances, has completely emerged from the political system of the Reformation age. On the other hand, Protestant Germany, the land of a gifted, highly cultured people, has long been a leader in the advancement of intellectual freedom and the spiritual values which can only flourish where freedom of thought vitalises and enriches the higher spiritual life. It may suffice to mention only a few names in order to visualise the splendid spiritual inheritance which it has contributed to the progress of human culture in philosophy, science, theology, criticism, literature, history, art, music [6]—Kant and Hegel in philosophy, Humboldt and Helmholtz in science, Schleiermacher and Ritschl in theology, Baur and Wellhausen in the higher criticism, Goethe and Schiller in literature, Ranke and Mommsen in history, Menzel and

[6] For a comprehensive review of this contribution, see "German Culture," edited by W. P. Paterson (1915). This concise but illuminating work was written during the war. The objectivity with which, on the whole, it treats the subject is highly creditable to the self-restraint and sane judgment of the writers, who, in the midst of the passion and prejudice aroused by a terrific international convulsion, kept their self-possession so remarkably. I wonder whether any other set of writers in the belligerent countries concerned, Germany included, could have given so fine an exhibition of this self-possession.

Werner in art, Bach and Handel in music. And this is the Germany of Martin Luther—the Germany that, in varying measure and for different reasons, it may be, honours his name and his achievement as the greatest inheritance of German history. Truly Martin Luther—the Luther of the Diet of Worms and the Wartburg, if not exactly the Luther of the wildest of his bouts with the Papists, the Sacramentarians, the Sects, the Jews—this Luther was the originator of a progressive movement, the potentiality of which he could not, indeed, envisage, but of which he was, nevertheless, the indirect creator. It would, of course, be very naïve to ascribe the rich development of Protestant German culture directly to the genius of the great Augustinian friar of Wittenberg. Directly he could not reach beyond the ambit of his own genius, circumscribed as it was by the limitations of his mind and temperament, and by the conditions of his time. But it does stand to the credit of the movement he inaugurated that it bore within it the power to quicken and inspire the genius of the future in the pursuit of a manifold spiritual good.

II. Extra-National Influence

I can only, in the space at my disposal, rapidly indicate the sweep of Luther's influence in the extra-national sphere.

The new evangelism penetrated early into the Netherlands, where its influx had been prepared by the teaching of John of Wessel (Wessel Gansfort), the practical reforming activity of the Brethren of the Common Life, and the writings of Erasmus, the quondam monk of Steyn, near Gouda, and the antagonist of the obscurantist Louvain theologians. Wittenberg attracted students from the Netherlands, and erelong Luther's works were imported, translated, printed, and sold by the thousand. Many of the Augustinian monks, notably those of Antwerp and Dordrecht, adopted the new doctrines. From their ranks came its first martyrs in Henry Voes and John Esch, who suffered at Antwerp in 1523, and some of its most forceful missionaries in Germany itself were refugees from the Netherlands. These martyrdoms called forth Luther's Missive to the

Christians in the Netherlands[1] and inspired one of his heroic poems. The influence of Zwingli, as well as Luther, erelong made itself felt through his doctrinal allies, Hoen and Rode, and ultimately that of Calvin became predominant in the southern Walloon provinces as well as in those of the north. The tide of heresy gathered force as it flowed, and from Flanders to Friesland, from Holland to Cleves, its surge was felt in every town and village.

As Lord of the Netherlands, the Emperor Charles was free to enforce his will against its adherents, as he was not in the empire itself. There were no Protestant Electors and princes in the Netherlands to manipulate in the interest of his international policy, though he was fain at times to reckon with the inborn love of freedom of this sturdy, high-spirited Netherland folk. Even before the Diet of Worms he had signalised his anti-Lutheran zeal by the publication of a placard forbidding the printing and reading of Luther's books, in consequence of the papal Bull of Condemnation. After the Diet came the promulgation of an edict denouncing death and forfeiture of goods against heretics, and the appointment of inquisitors to put it in force.[2] It was the first of about a dozen issued between 1521 and 1555, and some of them, directing heretical women to be burned alive, really beat the record. That of 1550 proposed to introduce the Spanish Inquisition, but had to be modified in deference to the determined opposition of Antwerp and the Council of Brabant, backed by the intercession of the Governess-General, Mary.[3] These edicts might temporarily retard the progress of the Reformation. They could not prevent its secret diffusion or obviate the connivance of the city or provincial authorities, which, in many cases, were reluctant to carry out the behest of what they deemed a foreign jurisdiction. Their very frequency attested the difficulty of crushing the spirit of resistance. The inquisitors might multiply their victims; might drive shiploads of fugitives across the North Sea to England; might force many to recant. They could not restore the undisputed sway of the old creed. Luther's Bible, translated into Dutch, multiplied the candidates for martyrdom,[4] whose number the outbreak of Anabaptist fanaticism, which persecution nurtured at Amsterdam, Groningen, Leyden, and elsewhere, increased by the thousand. The bloodthirsty policy of repression was, in fact, destined to defeat itself under Charles's son, Philip, whose tyranny at last drove the people into resolute revolt, and resulted in the foundation of the Dutch Republic and the establishment of the Reformed Church in its Calvinist form.

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[1] "Werke," xii. 73 f.

[2] Brandt, "History of the Reformation in the Low Countries," 40-42; see Mackinnon, "History of Modern Liberty," ii., for a more detailed sketch.

[3] *Ibid.*, 88-91.

In the Scandinavian countries, on the other hand, Lutheranism achieved a permanent triumph in the evangelisation of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and the Baltic Provinces. In Sweden the new evangelism, which had been introduced by Olave and Laurence Petersen, who had studied at Wittenberg, found a strenuous champion in Gustavus Vasa. The patriotic leader of the revolt against Danish domination was proclaimed king in 1523, and from a mixture of religious and practical motives, abetted the evangelical preachers. In 1527 the Diet of Vesteräs sanctioned the pure preaching of the Gospel, and made over the bulk of the ecclesiastical property to the crown. Two years later a national Synod, convened at Oerebro, applied the decision of the Diet, and reconstituted the Church, in dependence on the State, after the Lutheran model, whilst retaining the old hierarchical jurisdiction and many of the features of the old ritual. To Sweden, Germany and Western Europe were, a century later, to be deeply indebted for the defence of the Reformation by Gustavus Adolphus, Vasa's heroic descendant, and his invincible army, against the forces of the counter-Reformation.

In Denmark an ineffective attempt to introduce the Reformation was made by Christian II., who invited Martin Reinhard, a disciple of Luther, and Carlstadt to preach the evangelical faith (1520-21). It was renewed, with more success, by his uncle, Frederick I., Duke of Schleswig-

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[4] Brandt, "History of the Reformation in the Low Countries," 59.

Holstein, who displaced him in consequence of the revolt of the clergy and nobility in 1523. Frederick lent his support to the evangelistic work of Hans Tausen, another disciple of Luther—"the Danish Luther," as he has been called—with such effect that the Diet of Odense in 1527 practically sanctioned the free profession of the Lutheran teaching, which, three years later, that of Copenhagen confirmed. Before his death in 1533 the movement had virtually undermined the old Church, and a Romanist reaction in opposition to his son, Christian III., an ardent Lutheran, was ultimately quelled in 1536. The Diet, which met at Copenhagen in October, decreed the establishment of the Protestant Church. In the following year Bugenhagen was summoned from Wittenberg to organise the Church on Lutheran lines under superintendent-bishops. In this consummation Norway—then united with Denmark—where Lutheran emissaries had also been active, shared through the collapse of the Romanist opposition. In the Scandinavian lands Luther thus achieved the establishment of the Reformed Church, coextensive with the nation and dependent on the civil power, which he had failed to realise for the whole of Germany. In Iceland, where Luther's disciple, Gottschalksen, translated the New Testament into the vernacular, it found an ardent protagonist in Bishop Einarsen from 1539 onwards, though it was not till 1554 that the Lutheran Church was finally established in this far north dependency of Denmark. From Sweden it penetrated into Finland. From an early period it had begun the conquest of the north-eastern Baltic region—East Prussia, Courland, Livonia, Esthonia—through the missionary work at Königsberg and Riga of Brissmann, Speratus, and other emissaries whom Luther, as we have seen,[5] had sent thither.

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[5] "Luther and the Reformation," iii. 147. For the progress of the movement in Scandinavia, see Wordsworth, "The National Church of Sweden" (1911); Stefansson, "Denmark and Sweden" (1916); Willson, "History of the Church and State in Norway" (1905); Moeller, "History of the Christian Church," iii. 163 f.; Collins, "Cambridge Modern History," ii. 599 f. (1903); Hauser and Renaudet, "Les Débuts de l'Age Moderne," 216 f. (1929); Butler, "The Reformation in Sweden" (1884); Hallendorff and Schück, "History of Sweden," 129 f. (1929), trans. by Yapp.

Unlike the case of Sweden and Denmark, the evangelical movement long failed to secure the royal goodwill in Poland and Lithuania. Lutheranism found in Sigismund I. (1506-48) an active opponent. It nevertheless received a welcome in the towns, from Dantzig to Cracow, and among the nobility, if not the people. The evangelisation of East Prussia, which Albrecht of Brandenburg, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, transformed into a secular duchy, gave a great impulse to its spread in Prussian Poland. In 1525 Dantzig rose against its Roman Catholic municipality and introduced the Reformation. Though Sigismund drastically repressed the revolt, the movement was only temporarily checked. Its spread was materially promoted by the resort of numerous Polish students to Wittenberg, Strassburg, Zürich, and Geneva, who returned to their native land as its zealous missionaries; and by the influx of refugees from Bohemia, whose expulsion was decreed by King Ferdinand in 1548, the year of Sigismund's death. Under his son, the second Sigismund, who adopted a sympathetic attitude, and to whom Luther had dedicated an edition of his Bible, and Calvin in 1549 inscribed his Commentary on Hebrews, it made rapid progress, though henceforth the influence of Calvin tended to displace that of Luther. King Sigismund granted the free exercise of religion to Dantzig and other towns, and the Diet of Petrikau in 1556 decreed the same right to the nobility. In this year the return of John Laski (à Lasco) from his chequered exile in Germany, England, and Friesland, gave it a forceful and experienced leader, who, besides taking part in the work of translating the Bible into Polish, rendered, as superintendent of the churches in Lesser Poland, material service as an organiser till his death in 1560. Unfortunately the dissensions between Lutherans and Calvinists gave scope to the counter-Reformation under the direction of the Jesuit Order. The movement, which had found its support almost exclusively among the nobles and the middle class of the towns, failed to take a grip of the mass of the peasantry. "It was," says Professor Dyboski, "among the cultured, the educated class only, that Protestantism ever took real root in Poland; the large mass of the peasant people remained untouched by it. It never became a popular religion." [6]

The survival of the Hussite movement in the Utraquist party and in the Bohemian Brethren (the *Unitas Fratrum*), who both rejected the papal jurisdiction, held out the prospect of a ready reception of Luther's teaching in Bohemia and Moravia. The Hussites had, in fact, as we have seen, hailed in Luther the successor of their martyred founder, and some of Luther's opponents had attributed to him a Hussite origin. At the Leipzig Disputation and in his "Address to the Nobility," he had justified their antagonism to the Church and asserted their right to toleration. He even went the length of declaring that he and many others had been Hussites without knowing it. He had a keen interest in both sections of the Bohemian "heretics," and in 1522 exhorted the Bohemian Diet to remain firm in their antagonism to Rome. In the following year he wrote for their instruction his work "On the Institution of the Ministry," in which he sketched a reorganisation of the Bohemian Church on evangelical lines. His sanguine hope of a rally of the Bohemian nation to the Reformation was wrecked by the opposition of the conservative section of the Utraquist party, which erelong gained the upper hand. With the Bohemian Brethren, on the other hand, he continued in friendly negotiation. These more radical and puritanic followers of Hus emphasised the spiritual presence of Christ in the Sacrament, the rebaptism of Roman Catholics who joined their communion, the necessity of love in addition to faith for justification, and the celibacy of the clergy. For their enlightenment he penned in 1523 his tract on "The Adoration of the Sacrament." This attempt at enlightenment failed in the meantime, and it was only ten years later that the negotiation was renewed in the former friendly spirit. Ultimately, as the result of these protracted negotiations, during which the Brethren approximated the Lutheran teaching, an understanding on the points at issue, satisfactory to both sides, was reached.[7] Luther paid them the not unmerited compliment of testifying, in 1540, that since apostolic times no community stood so near to the teaching and usages of the early Church as theirs.

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[6] "Outlines of Polish History," 86 (1925); Morfill, "Poland," 72 f. (1893). See also Paul, "The Reformation in Poland" (1924).

Luther's teaching invaded Hungary almost from the outset through Hungarian students, who studied at Wittenberg, and merchants, who attended the annual Leipzig fair and brought back his books. A large number of Germans had settled in towns like Buda, Presburg, Oedenburg, in the mining regions of the north, and in Transylvania, and in this section of the population the seed of Luther's doctrines rapidly took root. "Owing to the intimate relations between the Germans of Hungary and their brethren abroad," says Vambéry, "the teachings of Luther gained almost as rapidly ground among them as among their countrymen in Germany. . . . In the course of a few years the new movement had assumed such formidable proportions that it attracted the attention of the whole nation."[8] From 1523 King Louis II. vainly strove to arrest its diffusion by repressive edicts, and in 1526 a rising of the miners and woodcutters of the north, who, like the German peasants, demanded the free preaching of the Gospel as well as social betterment, revealed its increasing extension. Louis's queen, Mary, the sister of Charles V., actively abetted it. The battle of Mohacs in 1526, which cost the king his life, only accelerated its spread. The efforts of John Zapolya, who was elected king in eastern Hungary and Transylvania and continued his repressive policy, to stem its progress were futile. Under the leadership of John Honter, the movement eventuated in 1545 in the establishment of the evangelical Church in Transylvania (Synod of Mediasch), on the basis of the Augsburg Confession. In western Hungary, which recognised King Ferdinand, its progress, under the direction of Matthias Devay, who had studied at Wittenberg, was equally effective in spite of persecution, and in 1546 the Synod of Eperies gave it corporate form, which Ferdinand was compelled to tolerate. "The victory of the Reformation became, a few decades only, after the battle of Mohacs, complete through the larger part of Hungary."[9] In both divisions of the country Calvinism had its adherents, and ultimately, in Hungary proper, it gained the upper hand, whilst the large German element in the population of Transylvania adhered to the Augsburg Confession.

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[7] For these negotiations, see "Werke," xxxviii. 75 f. (1533); l. 375 f. (1538).

[8] Vambéry and Heilprin, "Hungary," 322 (4th ed., 1890).

From 1530 onwards its leaven was also working among the southern Slavs in Carniola, Carinthia, and Styria, through the evangelical preaching of Truber at Laibach, and after his flight to Germany in 1547, through his translation of the Scriptures, his Catechism, Homilies, etc., into the Slavonic tongue, which were also circulated in Croatia and Illyria. Recalled to Carniola by the Provincial Diet, he organised an evangelical Church in his native land in 1561-65.[10]

Italy itself furnished not a few recruits to the new evangelism before the reorganised Inquisition set to work in 1542 to stamp it out. Even if Italian humanism was less generally allied with the reforming spirit than in the lands north of the Alps, a number of its adherents, including the Spanish-born Juan Valdés, Contarini, Sadoleto, Morone, were influenced by the evangelical movement in Germany, though they did not go the length of accepting the doctrine of justification and its implications in the full Lutheran sense. Luther's writings were already being sold in Italy in 1519, and some of them, as well as Melanchthon's "Loci Communes," erelong appeared in Italian translations. Brucioli's version of the Scriptures was printed at Venice in 1530-32. Ultimately a number of these humanist reformers became confirmed adherents of Luther's teaching, and Luther's correspondence, as we have noted, reveals the existence of an evangelical community at Venice under the leadership of Altieri. It found, too, in other centres—Ferrara, Modena, Naples, Lucca—aggressive exponents in men like Peter Martyr Vermigli, Prior of the Augustinian monastery at Naples and afterwards at Lucca; Bernard Ochino, Vicar-General of the Capuchin Order; the Marquis Galeazzo Caraccioli; Aonio Paleario of Sienna; Coelius Curio;

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[9] Vambéry and Heilprin, 325.

[10] Moeller, "History of the Christian Church," iii. 217.

Carnesecchi; and ultimately Pietro Paolo Vergerio, who, as papal nuncio, interviewed Luther at Wittenberg, and later worked on behalf of the evangelical movement in his diocese of Capodistria. Of these Paleario and Carnesecchi finally fell victims of the Inquisition; the others were driven into exile, to become active propagandists of their evangelical faith in co-operation with its leaders in Switzerland, Germany, and England.[11] Luther also found a considerable number of disciples even in Spain, the stronghold of aggressive Roman Catholicism.

On Zwingli, and later on Calvin, Luther undoubtedly exercised a formative influence. His writings were already in 1518 being printed at Basle and circulated at Zürich and elsewhere in Switzerland. They were winning many admirers and even adherents, including Zwingli himself, who eagerly perused and distributed them.[12] Their perusal undoubtedly exercised an incisive influence on his early development as a reformer. Hitherto he had been an enthusiastic disciple of Erasmus and the active protagonist of the Erasmian ideal of a practical Reformation, based on the teaching of "the Gospel" in the Erasmian sense. From 1519 the influence of Luther began to displace that of Erasmus, whom he finally estranged by his kindly protection of Hutten in 1523. "Luther is approved by all the learned at Zürich," he writes in February 1519. This influence is apparent in his appropriation of Luther's teaching on justification, with its religious implications, and in his more definite insight into the scope of the evangelical movement initiated by the Wittenberg Reformer. Henceforth the Lutheran conception of "the Gospel" more and more displaces that of Erasmus. This conception is clearly reflected in his earliest reforming tract on "The Liberty of

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[11] Rodocanacchi, "La Réforme en Italie" (1921); Moeller, "History of the Christian Church," iii. 218 f.; Collins and Laurence, "Cambridge Modern History," ii. 377 f.; Hauser et Renaudet, "Les Débuts de l'Age Moderne," 252 f. (1929); M'Crie, "History of the Reformation in Italy" (1855).

[12] Staehelin, "Zwingli," i. 166 f. For a collection of extracts from the Zwingli correspondence of the year 1519, relative to Luther, see Jackson, "Zwingli," 139 f. (1901).

Foods" (April 1522), which breathes the thought and spirit of "The Liberty of a Christian Man," and in the emphasis laid on salvation through the righteousness of Christ alone in the "Friendly Petition and Exhortation to the Swiss Confederates" (July 1522).[13] In the latter work, indeed, he disclaims the name of Lutheran, and ascribes the similarity of their teaching to the fact that both have drunk from the same evangelical source.[14] He appears, in truth, very sensitive on the implication of his indebtedness to Luther. "I am a patron," he declared in November 1522, in his "Suggestion" to the Diet of Nürnberg, in which he protested against the papal demand for the suppression of Luther, "not of the cause of Luther, but of the Gospel," whilst defending him as "unquestionably a pious and learned man."[15] In his "Exposition of the Sixty-Seven Articles" he emphatically asserts his independence as a reformer, whilst also expressing his high appreciation of the man and recognising the immense service he has rendered to the cause of reform in his conflict with Rome. He is keenly concerned to show, in refutation of the charge of his Romanist opponents, that he is merely repeating Luther's heresies, that he has derived his teaching, independently of Luther, from the Word of God, not from any human source. He began, he declares, to preach the Gospel at Einsiedeln in 1516, before anyone in his locality had as much as heard the name of Luther, and learned the teaching of Christ not from him, but from the New Testament. In preaching Christ, Luther has only done what he himself has done, though, God be praised, he has brought to Him a far greater multitude than he and others have been able to do. It is to Thomas von Wyttenbach, his old teacher at Basle, and to Erasmus, who had led him to know Christ in the original source, that he acknowledges his indebtedness.[16] In his anxiety to prove to the papists his independence of Luther, he forgets that he had ultimately gone beyond the Erasmian conception of

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[13] Zwingli's "Werke," i. 74 f., 210 f., ed. by Egli and Finsler (1901) for the "Corpus Reformatorum."

[14] *Ibid.*, i. 224.

[15] *Ibid.*, i. 437.

[16] *Ibid.*, ii. 144 f., 217. See also the older edition of Zwingli's "Werke," ed. by Schuler and Schulthess, i. 253 f. (1828-61).

"the Gospel," and that Luther's early writings did, albeit perhaps unconsciously, contribute to mould and deepen his evangelical convictions, as his own notes on the Pauline Epistles conclusively prove.[17] He forgot, too, that the Erasmian influence fails to explain his evolution into the aggressive evangelical reformer. "Humanism," as Strauss aptly says, "was large-minded, but faint-hearted." [18]

At the same time, though under a greater obligation to Luther's early teaching than he was willing to acknowledge, he was not a mere echo of the Wittenberg theologian. He erelong went further than Luther in the rebound from the doctrines and usages of the mediæval Church. He differed from Luther in temperament, training, and religious experience, and his distinctive individuality as a reformer and a liberal theologian ultimately brought him into sharp collision with his greater reforming contemporary.

There can be little doubt as to the source of the influence which transformed Calvin into an active evangelical reformer, and markedly influenced his thought as an evangelical theologian. Like Zwingli, he was a humanist before he became a votary of the new evangelism, and was for a time an active member of the group of reforming churchmen and scholars in France, in which the spirit and influence of Lefèvre and Erasmus ruled. But, unlike Zwingli, he developed rapidly into the aggressive evangelical reformer. At the age of twenty-three the brilliant young humanist had already become an ardent disciple of Luther. The evidence of this swift transition is supplied by his own writings. In 1529, at the age of twenty-one, he seems to have already had some knowledge of Luther's works.[19] By November 1533 the transition from the teaching of Erasmus to that of Luther had taken place in virtue of "the sudden conversion," of which he writes in his Commentary on the Psalms,[20] and which had probably occurred in the previous year. Of this transition there is decisive evidence in the discourse which he wrote for his friend, Nicolas Cop, and Cop, as Rector of the University for the year, delivered on 1st November 1533.[21] The introductory description of the new theology as "Christian philosophy," in contrast to the theology of the schoolmen, is, indeed, taken from Erasmus, but the contents plainly reflect the teaching of Luther. It was, in fact, based on a sermon delivered by Luther on 1st November 1522, on the text, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matt. v. 3),[22] and the writer reproduces the distinctive Lutheran doctrine of salvation by the grace of God in virtue of faith, not of works, and protests against the persecution of those who are prepared to die for their faith and are unjustly condemned as heretics.[23] Of this theology he became the expounder in the first edition of the "Institutes of the Christian Religion," which he published at Basle in 1536.[24] Three years later he appears as its apologist in the "Reply to Cardinal Sadoleto," who, after Calvin's expulsion from Geneva in the previous year (1538), had attacked the Reformation and maligned the reformers in a letter to the Genevan Council. In this Reply he marshals, in a concise form and courteous, but firm tone, the arguments with which Luther in his voluminous polemics had vindicated himself and his cause from the Romanist charge of self-seeking and arrogant and seditious error. He denies that the Reformation means defection from the truth and desertion from the Church. It is, he maintains, in repetition of Luther, a return to the truth, as embodied in the Word of God, and to the ancient Church, which has been mangled and almost destroyed by the papal-mediæval distortion of it. He seeks to prove this in reference to doctrine, usages, and discipline. He explains and defends the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and denies that it leaves no room for works. Justification involves regeneration and sanctification in its fruits. He arraigns the gross superstitions which have grown around ecclesiastical belief and practice, such as transubstantiation, auricular confession, the intercession of saints, purgatory, and have falsified Christianity. He will not go the length of denying the title Church to the Roman Catholic communion. But he maintains that the actual Roman Catholic Church is largely anti-Christian, and has abused the legitimate power conferred by Christ on His ministers, and has exercised a bloody tyranny over the conscience. Mere ecclesiastical authority can never take the place of the Word of God and the individual conscience. He does not claim a monopoly of righteousness for the Reformed Church, since its members are sinful and fallible. But he challenges comparison between its discipline and that of Rome—that fountain-head of unspeakable abominations—and is ready to abide the trial at the great judgment seat, to which Sadoleto had appealed.

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[17] Staehelin, "Zwingli," i. 173 f.

[18] "Ulrich von Hutten," 346 (Eng. trans.).

[19] "Opera," ix. 51.

[20] *Ibid.*, xxxi. 22. God, he says, animum meum subita conversione ad docilitatem subegit.

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[21] There seems to me to be no substantial reason for doubting Calvin's authorship of the discourse. For various views of the problem, see Williston Walker, "John Calvin," 81 f. (1906).

[22] The sermon is given in Luther's "Werke," x., Pt. III., 400 f. See also Lang, "Die Bekehrung Johannes Calvin's," 47-54; "Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und Kirche," 1887.

[23] "Opera," x^b. 30-35. Published in full from a copy found at Strassburg by the editors of Calvin's Works. In the actual delivery of the discourse Cop apparently toned down some of its statements. Doumergue, "Jean Calvin," i. 331 (1899).

[24] *Ibid.*, i. 27 f. In its later expanded form he treats the doctrine of Justification in "Opera," xxx. 333 f.

All this is a reflex of the master mind of Wittenberg. But it is also the reflex of a master of lucid, reasoned, and restrained exposition. Comparatively brief and admirable in tone, the Reply is the most forceful plea of its kind which the age produced, and convincingly shows that Luther had gained a champion hardly second to himself in intellectual power, and superior in the refined use of the controversial weapon.[25]

Calvin stood nearer to Luther than Zwingli, though, like him, differing in some essential respects in his ecclesiastical and doctrinal views. He had, too, a happier experience than Zwingli in his active association at Frankfurt, Hagenau, Worms, and Ratisbon in 1539-41, with the leaders of the German Reformation, especially with Melanchthon, in the task of guiding and safeguarding the movement. In his anxiety to secure its effective union, he even went the length of signing the Augsburg Confession, after Melanchthon had modified the article on the Lord's Supper.[26] He wrote a preface in commendation of a French translation of the "Loci Communes" in 1546.[27] With Luther himself he never came into personal intercourse, and wrote him only one letter, which did not come into his hands, about a year previous to the Reformer's death. Whilst deploring in a letter to Melanchthon[28] his outrageous intolerance of the Swiss theologians in the latest phase of his polemic against them, he nevertheless expresses his deep veneration for and indebtedness to him. He speaks of him as "one whom I venerate with all my heart. We all, I confess, owe much to him."

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[25] The Epistle of Sadoleto and Calvin's Reply are in "Opera," v. 365 f., Eng. trans. by Beveridge, in Vol. I. of "Calvin's Tracts," published by the Calvin Translation Society.

Luther, on his side, highly appreciated his Reply to Sadoleto, and sent him a kindly greeting through Bucer.[29] He was, too, favourably impressed by his treatment of the sacramental question, and seems to have recognised in him the man best fitted to bring about an accommodation on this bitterly disputed question. "He is certainly a learned and pious man," he remarked to his Wittenberg bookseller, on perusing in April 1545 the Latin translation of a Tract of Calvin on the Supper. "If Oecolampadius and Zwingli had expressed themselves thus at the outset, we should never have been in so long a controversy."[30]

As in other lands, humanism prepared the way for the impact of Luther's teaching on France. Its leader in the early sixteenth century was Lefèvre, the mystic and erudite exponent of the new culture, who combined with it the reforming spirit, wrote Commentaries on the Psalms, the Pauline Epistles, and the Gospels, translated the Bible into Latin and French, and applied in tentative, if limited, fashion the critical method to the Gospel history. He emphasised the supreme authority of Scripture, as against ecclesiastical tradition and the scholastic theology, justification by faith apart from merit, the spiritual significance of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the non-sacrificial character of the Mass.[31] He, in fact, anticipated Luther to a certain extent in some of his theological views, though his teaching is not, as some writers hold, altogether identical with Luther's. He strove, too, to inaugurate a practical reformation on the basis of the ancient Gospel, and kindled in his disciples, Briçonnet, Farel, Roussel, Vatable, Pavannes, Berquin, and others, who gathered round him at Meaux, the capital of Briçonnet's diocese, the fire of his own zeal in behalf of such a reformation. This reformation did not, however, involve for him the denial of the papal supremacy or the disruption of the Church. Though he enjoyed the patronage and protection of Francis I. and his sister, Margaret of Angoulême, his teaching aroused the antagonism of the Sorbonne, and in 1525, during the captivity of the king in Spain, he was compelled to flee to Strassburg. The release of Francis enabled him to return in the following year, and to continue, unmolested, his exegetical work and his translation of the Old Testament till his death in 1536, under Margaret's protection at Blois and Nérac.

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[26] Schaff, "Swiss Reformation," ii. 666-667.

[27] "Opera," ix. 847-850.

[28] *Ibid.*, xii. 98-100. *Cf.* letter to Bullinger, November 1544, in which he recognises him as "an eminent servant of God." Herminjard, "Correspondance des Réformateurs," ix. 374 (1897).

[29] *Ibid.*, x^b. 402, October 1539.

[30] Doumergue, "Calvin," ii. 573 (1902).

His influence as an active reformer henceforth recedes into the background of the stage, of which the preachers and martyrs of a more aggressive movement took possession, and on which, like Erasmus, he was not fitted to play a part. He and his more moderate followers were unable to face the fact that "the Gospel cannot be preached without the Cross," as Toussain wrote to Oecolampadius.[32] Only in a limited sense can he be called "the Father of the French Reformation," as some French writers have described him. This title belongs rather to Luther, as far as the earlier history of the evangelical movement in France is concerned. The impulse to a more aggressive reformation came from Wittenberg, Zürich, Strassburg, and ultimately from Geneva, not from Meaux, though it was among his more ardent disciples—Farel, Pavannes, Berquin—that the Lutheran teaching found its earliest protagonists, before being martyred, like Berquin and Pavannes, or driven into exile, like Farel, Lambert, and Calvin. In 1519 Luther's Latin writings were being read at Paris. Though the Sorbonne condemned them two years later, they were all the more widely circulated in consequence. Not only at Meaux, but at Lyons, they were largely bought, and as early as 1524 a royal decree complains of the prevalence of "the Lutheran sect" in this region.[33] It was taking hold of Bourges, where Wolmar was diffusing Luther's teaching, and even at Toulouse, the stronghold of orthodoxy, the light of the new theology as well as the new learning was beginning to shine.[34] At Avignon Luther's works were being read by the Franciscan monk, Francis Lambert, who stoutly maintained against the heresy hunters that they contained more pure theology than all the writings of the monks, and erelong found it advisable to migrate to Zürich and Wittenberg. "All over France, as well as in the German cities," reports a contemporary, with some exaggeration apparently, "Luther's works are being printed and published."[35] "Lutherans" became, in these early years, the distinctive name applied to the evangelical reformers who went beyond Lefèvre in their propaganda of a more uncompromising and challenging faith. Under the inspiration of Luther the movement had begun which, in spite of intermittent persecution in the earlier part of the reign of Francis, and unrelaxed persecution towards the end of it, was to culminate, in that of his son Henry II., under the influence of Calvin, in the constitution of the French Reformed Church.

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[31] For his theology, as contained especially in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (1512), and that on the Gospels (1522), see Barnaud, "Jacques Lefèvre," 25 f., 62 f. (1900); see also Renaudet, "Préréforme et Humanisme à Paris," 622 f. (1915).

[32] Herminjard, "Correspondance des Réformateurs," i. 447.

In addition to the survival of Lollardism and the nascent influence of humanism under the direction of Erasmus, Luther's works were sowing the seed of the evangelical Reformation in England. They were early circulated, and were forbidden in 1521.[36] In this year their influence made

[33] Moutarde, "Étude Historique sur la Réforme à Lyons," 20-21 (1881); Buisson, "Castellion," i. 88 (1892).

[34] Christie, "Etienne Dolet," 75-76 (1899).

[35] "Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris," 94 (ed. by Lalanne, 1854).

[36] Wilkins, "Concilia," ii. 690. A collection of them was burned at St Paul's Cross in this year. Gairdner, "Lollardy," i. 310.

itself felt in the University of Cambridge, where a group of ardent young men, including Stafford, Barnes, Latimer, Bilney, Coverdale, and John Lambert, is found meeting in a tavern to discuss the new theology. So little did they conceal their Lutheran sympathies that the tavern was known by the nickname of "Germany."[37] Some years later, a similar group, which included Clark, Garret, and Frith, is found reading and discussing the Scriptures and the works of Luther at Oxford. Both groups ultimately came under the cognisance of Cardinal Wolsey, who purged the universities of this heretic leaven. To Luther's writings was added, from 1526 onwards, William Tyndale's translation of the Greek New Testament, the printing of which he finished at Worms in this year. Tyndale, a Cambridge humanist, who had spent the previous two years in Germany, may have sat at the feet of Luther himself, though this is hardly more than conjecture.[38] At all events, he appears to have made use of the third Wittenberg edition of Luther's translation.[39] He thus, indirectly, became the agent of diffusing the Lutheran influence in England, where, in spite of the mandate of Archbishop Warham to search for and burn the obnoxious volume, the book was widely read. It became, in fact, the basis of the first authorised version of the Scriptures in English, ultimately known as "The Great Bible" (1537-39). This influence is further shown by the martyrdom of half a score of heretics between 1530 and 1533, including besides Thomas Bilney, John Frith, who had also sojourned for a time in Germany.

In consequence of his breach with Rome over the divorce question, Henry VIII. himself, who had earned the title of Defender of the Faith by his Defence of the Seven Sacraments against Luther, was for a time, from political motives, disposed to favour the Lutheran Reformation. The Ten

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[37] Strype, "Memorials," i. 568.

[38] Demaus, the editor of his works, doubts this inferential Wittenberg visit, and thinks that he worked at his translation at Hamburg and at Cologne, where he began the printing of it in 1525, until compelled to flee up the Rhine to Worms. "Works," i., Biographical sketch.

[39] Gruber, "The First English New Testament and Luther" (1928).

Articles of 1536, the authorised translation of the Bible, and Cranmer's Litany in English in 1544, were distinct steps in this direction. In the Ten Articles, the Bible and the three ancient Creeds are declared to be the sum of the Christian faith. The forgiveness of sin in the sacrament of penance is ascribed, not to any work or merit on the part of man, but solely to the merits of Christ. Further, as in Luther's teaching, the sacraments are, implicitly at least, reduced from seven to three—baptism, penance, and the Lord's Supper—and the latter is explained in the Lutheran sense of the real presence. In the other articles the Lutheran influence is also discernible. In the fifth, justification, which is obtained through contrition and faith, joined with "charity," is due entirely to the mercy and grace of God in Christ, though stress is laid on good works as the necessary adjunct of faith.[40] In a set of Injunctions promulgated in 1538, the clergy are enjoined to provide a Bible in English in the churches for the people to peruse, and to encourage such perusal, whilst discouraging all contention thereon.[41] In this year a German embassy actually came to England to discuss a doctrinal agreement as the preliminary of a defensive alliance against the Emperor. Though Melanchthon was unable to take part in the discussion, he wrote a letter to the king warmly advocating a theological union,[42] and Luther himself commended the project.[43] Henry appointed a committee to debate the Augsburg Confession, probably under the presidency of Cranmer, with Myconius, and his fellow-deputies. The discussion, which lasted throughout the summer of 1538, resulted in agreement in regard to doctrine. An understanding on certain usages, such as communion in both kinds and the celibacy of the clergy, proved more difficult of attainment, since the king, unlike Cranmer, was not disposed to go so far on the road to Wittenberg. Its renewal in the following year had no better result.[44]

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[40] Wilkins, "Concilia," iii. 817 f. See also Lawrence, "Bampton Lecture," 1820, 198-199.

[41] *Ibid.*, iii. 815-817; Burnet, "History of the Reformation," i., Pt. I., 279-284.

[42] Letter in Strype, ii. 383.

[43] See his letter to Bishop Fox of Hereford, Enders, xi. 361-362, 12th May 1538.

The opportunist king was, however, but a very fickle patron of the new theology, and the reactionary Six Articles of 1539, which governed the ecclesiastical policy of the remainder of the reign, resulted in renewed martyrdoms, including John Lambert and Robert Barnes, one of Henry's agents in negotiating with the German evangelical princes and theologians. With the accession of Edward VI., Luther's influence again obtained for a time the ascendancy in the reforming work of Archbishop Cranmer, who threw off the restraint which he had been compelled to observe under the régime of the autocratic Henry. Luther's influence is amply apparent in the Book of Homilies, the reading of the Litany and the Gospels and Epistles in English during divine service,[45] the translation of Justus Jonas's Latin version of Luther's Shorter Catechism,[46] and in the First Book of Common Prayer. Whilst in the "Order of the Communion," which Cranmer drew up in 1548, the old ritual of the Mass was followed, communion in both kinds was sanctioned.[47] In the first draft of the Book of Common Prayer he was prepared to go beyond Luther and adopt the distinctive teaching of the more advanced Swiss reformers.[48] As debated into final form in the House of Commons in 1548-49, it shows an affinity to the Order drawn up by Bucer and Melanchthon for the reforming Archbishop of Cologne, Hermann von Wied, in 1543, and reflects the more conservative conception of the Real Presence.[49] The Lutheran influence is also discernible in the Forty-Two Articles in which the doctrines of justification by faith alone and the supreme authority of Scripture are emphasised,[50] whilst the Eucharistic teaching, as in the Second Book of Common Prayer, is that of Calvin.

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[44] For these negotiations, see Strype, i. 506-510, 522-529; ii. 383-388; Burnet, i., Pt. II., 488 f.; Prüser, "England und die Schmalkaldener," 1535-40 (1929).

[45] Wilkins, iv. 3-8.

[46] A Short Instruction into the Christian Religion. See Moeller, "History of the Christian Church," iii. 209.

[47] "Liturgies of the Reign of Edward VI." 4-5 (1844) (Parker Society).

[48] "Original Letters Relating to the English Reformation," ii. 383 (Parker Society); Pollard, "Cranmer," 214-215.

[49] "Liturgies," 79-81.

In view of this marked impact of the Lutheran teaching on the early English evangelical movement, the striving of some English ecclesiastical writers to disown all indebtedness to Germany is rather singular. Even Mr Trevelyan, who writes as an historian, and not as a churchman, seems to share this assumption. " England was not converted from Germany; she changed her own opinion, and had begun that process long before Wittenberg or Geneva became famous in religious controversy." [51] Rather misleading. In his recently published " History of England," however, he recognises the Lutheran influence.

As in England, Lollardism and incipient Humanism, though in a more limited degree, contributed to the reception of Luther's teaching in Scotland. His works were being read in the land before 1525, as an Act of the Scottish Parliament prohibiting their importation shows.[52] Tyndale's New Testament was soon to follow.[53] Before the passing of this Act the new evangelism had already been propagated by a Frenchman, M. de la Tour, who had accompanied the Regent Albany to Scotland, probably in 1523, and, for propagating his Lutheran views there, was burned at Paris in October 1527.[54] Three weeks after the enactment of 1525, the Bishop of Aberdeen is found complaining of the spread of " the books of that heretic, Luther," within his diocese, and the sheriffs were set to work to make an inquisition throughout the region for the possessors of them.[55] Among those who not only read them, but dared to disseminate their teaching, was Patrick Hamilton, a near relative, through his mother, of King James V., who had studied at the Universities of Paris and Louvain, and had attained a high reputation as a humanist before he returned to Scotland in 1523. During the next four years he became an active disciple of Luther in the University of St Andrews, and early in 1527 was cited by Archbishop James Beaton as suspect of heresy. He escaped to Germany, and spent some months at the newly founded University of Marburg,[56] where he had the benefit of the inspiring fellowship of Francis Lambert, Frith, and Tyndale, and wrote a Thesis which expounds the Gospel in the distinctive Lutheran sense and even phraseology.[57]

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[50] It is derived largely from the Augsburg Confession. See Paterson, " Rule of Faith," 268 (1912); Dixon, " History of the Church of England," iii. 520; Mason, " Thomas Cranmer," 148 (1898); Söderblom, " Einigung der Christenheit," 49, German translation by Katz (1925).

[51] " England in the Age of Wyclif," 351.

[52] " Acts," ii. 295.

[53] Letter of Halkett, English envoy at Antwerp, to Wolsey, in which he tells him that Tyndale's translation was being imported into Scotland, particularly Edinburgh and St Andrews. Anderson, " Annals of the English Bible," ii. 409.

[54] " Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris," 326-327.

[55] Hay Fleming, " The Reformation in Scotland," 176.

For preaching this Gospel, after his return in the autumn of 1527, he was tried and burned at St Andrews on the last day of February 1528.[58]

His death only extended the teaching for which he had given his life, as the persecution, the numerous martyrdoms and expatriations of the next dozen years, and the renewal, in 1535, of the Act of 1525, prove. As John Lindsay told the Archbishop, " My Lord, the reek (smoke) of Patrick Hamilton has infected as many as it blew upon." [59] After the death of James V. in 1542 it found for a period a patron in the Regent Arran, at whose instigation the Scottish Parliament authorised the reading of the Bible in the English or Scots tongue in March 1543.[60] In this or the following year a worthy successor to Hamilton appeared in George Wishart, who had been a disciple of Luther before persecution drove him to England, Strassburg, and Zürich. As the account of his trial and his indictment for heresy show, he remained an adherent of Luther's theology, though he adopted the Swiss view of the Lord's Supper and translated the First Helvetic Confession into English. On his return, he fearlessly evangelised in the northern and western districts of the country till his martyrdom in 1546. He left in his disciple, John Knox, the dauntless protagonist of the movement, which he was to carry to triumph in 1559-60. That Knox in his early period was a follower of Luther is shown by the commendatory epistle which he prefixed to Balnaves's "Treatise on Justification by Faith" in the distinctive Lutheran sense.[61] This doctrine he continued to hold, and bequeathed to the Reformed Church of Scotland, along with other distinctive Lutheran tenets,[62] though, in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and in Church polity, he and the Scottish Reformed Church followed Calvin, not Luther. It became and remained an integral part of evangelical preaching in Scotland. It forms a distinctive element of that of Thomas Boston and the "Marrow" men in the early eighteenth century in opposition to what became the Moderate party in the Scottish Church. But whether they now subscribe unreservedly to Luther's doctrinal system or not, Scots folk cherish a profound appreciation of him and his work as the renovator of the Church from Roman corruption and mediæval ecclesiastical despotism over the individual mind and conscience. Despite his obvious limitations, they regard Martin Luther as a religious, if not a national, hero. Carlyle, who cannot be described as a votary of Luther's theology, gave characteristic expression to this general appreciation of the great battler against the Papacy and its egregious claim to lord it over the souls of free men and women. "As often as Peter Swan (Provost) of Kirkcaldy came to London, he used to call on his old teacher.[63] . . . When Swan, once returning from Germany, told of having seen Luther's room in the Wartburg at

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[56] Knox says that he went to Wittenberg and met Luther and Melanchthon; but this seems a mistake.

[57] The Thesis, entitled " Patrick's Places "—commonplaces, " Loci Communes "—is given by Knox, " History of the Reformation," i. 19 f. See also H. Watt, in " Patrick Hamilton " by various writers, ed. by A. Cameron (1929).

[58] See the account of his activity and trial in Knox (" History," i. 13 f.), who borrows largely from Foxe's " Acts and Monuments." See also those of Lambert and Alesius, in the Appendix to Lorimer's " Patrick Hamilton."

[59] Knox, " History," i. 42.

[60] " Acts " ii. 415; Knox, i. 98 f.

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[61] Knox, "Works," iii. 5 f.

[62] It is implied, rather than expounded, in the "Scots Confession" of 1560.

[63] Carlyle acted for a time as the "dominie" of Kirkcaldy School.

Eisenach—'Ay!' said Carlyle. 'Were you there? When I was standing in that room, I felt that it was the holiest spot I had ever seen in this world, and I think so still!'"[64]

In this far-expanding movement we have the measure of Luther's influence. It is also the measure of the greatness of the man. He was one of those rare master spirits who create an epoch in religious history. In himself and his work, he stands forth as the embodiment of the power of ideas, operating through a great personality, which creates and inspires a new order of things, compels the old order to bend and be renewed in the mould of its formative genius and its commanding will. Luther had many co-operators in the creation of this far-flung movement, and some of them made a distinctive contribution to the ultimate outcome of it. The historic forces at work gave him his opportunity and shaped his achievement, but the religious inspiration which launched this complex dynamic movement on the world came from the monk of Wittenberg—the man of faith—the faith that can move mountains—of surpassing strength of will and character and religious conviction that knew how to impose themselves on his own age and rough hew the ages beyond him. If faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen, as in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, Luther's achievement was assuredly a memorable demonstration of its operation. Criticise his teaching as we will, and his method of maintaining it, this achievement is verily a concrete demonstration of the faith that overcomes, the living power behind what he conceived and taught and exemplified (albeit, in some respects, short of the ideal). Luther and his achievement are great enough to stand criticism, and enlightened criticism can only be serviceable to the movement to which he gave the compelling impulse. The partisan, ill-informed, prepossessed criticism, of which there is such a "spate" in current as well as past ecclesiastical literature, has no right to a hearing.[65] Whatever one's ecclesiastical prepossessions, whether the critic is competent or incompetent, fair or unfair, liberal or small-minded, he is a poor specimen of a man and a Christian who, in the presence of this marvellous Christian and his achievement, cannot join in the voice from heaven, " Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth ; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, for their WORKS do follow them."

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[64] D. A. Wilson, "Carlyle to Threescore and Ten," 1853-65, 218-219.

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[65] There lies before me one of the recent samples of this kind of criticism—" Three Reformers," by Jacques Maritain (1928). It is a set and jaundiced attempt *à la* Denifle to make out a case against Luther under the influence of ecclesiastical prepossessions. Much better in tone, and written with characteristic French vivacity, is that of his countryman, M. Febvre, " Un Destin, Martin Luther " (1928). Both are samples of those skimming generalisations which contain too many half-truths and unconscious untruths, into which the lack of a systematic study, at close quarters, of Luther's works and personality too often betrays their authors. Such effusions are poor fare for the student who has really tried to grapple at first hand with the real Luther from a long and systematic study of the original sources. From this point of view, they only nibble at the subject. In a different category stands Söderblom's " Humor och Melankoli och andra Lutherstudier " (1919). In the chapter on the Reformation, in the work by Gilbert Bagnani just published—" Rome and the Papacy "—there is no evidence of adequate first-hand knowledge of Luther. I can only ascribe his depreciation of the great Reformer, in comparison with Melanchthon, Zwingli, and Calvin, whom he appraises highly, to the fact that he does not seem to have read his works. The writer, as a comparatively open-minded, if all too sanguine, Roman Catholic, would certainly profit from a closer acquaintance with these works.

INDEX

A

Aberdeen, Bishop of, 356
Adolphus, Gustavus, 339
Aepin, Hamburg Superintendent, 107
Æsop, Fables of, 102-103
Agricola, John, 5, 161 f., 214, 333
Aigues-Mortes, 109
Albany, Regent, 356
Albert of Brandenburg-Culmbach, 216-217
Alberus, Erasmus, 215, 230-231
Albrecht, Duke of Prussia, 154, 341
Albrecht, O., 321
Aleander, 112, 230
Alesius, Alex., 108, 224
Alfonsus, 102
Altieri, 179, 344
Ambrose, 287-288
Amsdorf, 107, 123, 175, 207-208, 215, 224-225
Amsterdam, 339
Anabaptists, 6-7, 16, 35 f., 57 f., 85, 106, 152, 174, 178, 180, 186, 244, 249, 261, 265, 268, 337, 339
Angoulême, Margaret of, 351
Anhalt, 31
— Prince George of, 92, 124
— Princes of, 215
Antinomian controversy, 161 f.
Antwerp, 337-338
Appenzell, 42
Arians, the, 69, 136
Aristotle, 100, 105, 309, 314
Arminius, 330
Arran, the Regent, 357
Articles, the Forty-Two, 355
— the Six, 355
— the Ten, 354
Athanasius, 243, 291
Attila, 129
Augsburg, city of, 4-5, 11, 13, 14, 15, 20, 31, 42, 43, 46, 111, 112, 116, 119, 185, 230
— Confession, 1 f., 26, 31, 33-34, 110-111, 113, 117, 119, 181, 217, 246, 343-344, 349, 354
Augsburg, Confutation of, 12-13
— Diet of (1530), 1, 4-5, 7, 10, 12, 14, 18-19, 21, 24, 25, 27-28, 152, 162, 214; (1548), 217; (1555), 223, 328
— Edict of, 21
— Interim, 215
— Peace of, 217 f.
Augustine, St, 133, 135, 138, 148, 227, 241-242, 251, 262, 287-288, 291
Aurifaber, 208-209, 234, 307
Aurogallus, 196, 273 f., 288
Austria, 3, 43, 46, 50, 124
Avignon, 352

B

Bach, Seb., 336
Balnaves, 358
Baltic Provinces, 339
Barbarossa, 330
Barcelona, 1
Bärensprung, Burgomaster of Zwickau, 79
Barnes, Robert, 108, 353, 355
Basle, 43, 345-346
Baumgartner, 285
Bäumker, 329
Baur, 336
Bavaria, 50, 124
— Duke of, 3, 29-30, 50, 116, 125
Beaton, James, Archbishop, 357
" Bedenken " of Jonas, 89-90
Beelzebub, 130-131
Berlin, 176
Bern, 42
Bernard, St, 242
Bernhard, converted Jew, 195
Berquin, 351-352
Bibliander, 180
Bilney, Thomas, 353
Bismarck, 330
Blarer, 31, 240
Blaurock, 41, 48
Blois, 351
Bockelson, Jan, 52 f.
Boehmer, 236
Bohemia, 200, 223, 238, 342
Bohemian Brethren, 93, 342-343

Bologna, 1, 214
Boniface VIII., Pope, 128
Bora, Cath. von ("Kethe"), 108, 166, 209, 231 f., 237, 252
Boston, Thomas, 358
Boswell, 234
Bourges, 352
Brabant, Council of, 338
Brandenburg, Margrave George of, 424
— Margrave John of, 192
Bremen, 24
Brenner, the, 217
Brenz, 85, 215, 285
Briçonnet, Bishop, 351
Brissmann, 340
Brödli, 41
Brucioli, 344
Brück, Saxon Chancellor, 7, 10, 17, 19, 121, 174
Bucer, 22, 34, 51, 87, 111, 112, 113, 215, 224, 266-267, 271, 312, 350, 355
Buda-Pesth, 343
Bugenhagen, 49, 75, 107, 119, 123, 175, 207, 226, 229, 240, 274, 307, 317, 340
Bullinger, 34, 179, 189, 191
Bünderlin, 44, 185
Burgos, Paul, 199

C

Calvin, 85, 111, 113, 117, 208, 224, 338, 341, 347 f., 352
Cambridge, 224, 353
Camerarius, 13
Campeggio, papal legate, 3, 12, 110
Canossa, 331
Capella, Galeazzo, 101
Capito, 46, 111, 112
Capodistria, 345
Caraccioli, Marquis, 344
Carinthia, 344
Carlstadt, 5, 49, 57, 157, 188, 190, 250, 254, 339
Carlyle, Thomas, 287, 358-359
Carnesecchi, 345
Carniola, 344
Cassiodorus, 133
Catechisms, Luther's, 318 f.
Cato, 102
Chalcedon, Council of, 137
Chambord, Treaty of, 217
Charlemagne, 129
Charles V., Emperor, 1, 3 f., 23 f., 109 f., 134, 139, 142, 144-145, 158, 212 f., 268, 270, 338, 343, 354
Christian II. of Denmark, 339
Christian III. of Denmark, 340
Chrysostom, 287-288, 312
Cicero, 105, 130
Clark, 353
Clement of Alexandria, 190
Clement VII., Pope, 133
Cleves, 338
Coburg, 11, 22, 102, 328
Cochlaeus, 12, 111, 152-153, 229, 241, 244, 283
Coelius, Mansfeld preacher, 170, 209
Cognac, League of, 1
Colet, John, 241
Cologne, 180, 188, 213
Common Life, Brethren of, 337
Concord, Formula of, 225
Confessio Saxonica, 215
— *Tetrapolitana*, 20, 22
— *Virtembergensis*, 215
Consistorial courts, 88 f.
— Constitution, 90-91
Constance, 20, 23, 24, 213, 226
Constantine, Donation of, 127 f.
— Emperor, 145
Constantinople, Bishop of, 137
— Council of, 135
Contarini, Gasp., 110, 112, 114-115, 117, 131, 132, 244, 344
Cop, Nicolas, 348
Copenhagen, 340
Copernicus, 249
Cordatus, 78-79, 234
Corvinus, Hessian preacher, 106
"Councils and Churches," Luther's work on, 132 f., 184
Courland, 340
Coverdale, 353
Crabbe, Franciscan monk, 133
Cracow, 341
Cranach, Lucas, 105, 229
Cranmer, Archbishop, 354-356
Crêpy, Peace of, 122
Croatia, 344

Cruciger, 72, 75, 107, 119, 166, 273 f., 306, 313
Curia, Roman, 115, 130 f., 245
Curio, Coelius, 344

D

Dantzig, 341
Danube, the, 43, 212
Denck, Hans, 43 f., 47-49, 181, 185-186, 279
Denifle, 231
Denmark, 49, 307, 339-340
— Christian III. of, 31, 109, 118
— Frederick I. of, 49
"De Servo Arbitrio," 318
Devay, Matthias, 343
Dietenberger, 279
Dietrich, hymnologist, 328
— Magister, 309
— Veit, 234, 307
Döllinger, 330
Dominions, British, 57
Donatists, the, 69
Donauwörth, 212
Dordrecht, 337
Drachenburg, 213
Dungersheim, 292
Dürer, Albrecht, 105, 311
Dyboski, Professor, 341

E

Eck, 5, 12, 111, 112, 113, 114, 133, 146, 279, 292, 296
Edward VI., 355
Einarsen, Bishop, 340
Einbeck, 160
Eisenach, 64, 95, 99, 271
Eisleben, 161-162, 170, 173, 176, 179, 203-204, 208-209, 229, 307
Elbe, 81
Elizabeth, Princess, of Brandenburg, 206
— mother of Baptist, 61
Emser, 279-280, 283, 292
England, 128, 223-224, 336, 345, 352, 356
Eperies, Synod of, 343
Ephesus, Council of, 137
Epicurus, 107, 174, 227
Erasmus, 40, 106-107, 185-186, 225, 241, 244, 249, 287-288, 291 f., 337, 345-348, 351-352
Erastus, 218
Erfurt, 95, 99, 105, 231, 324, 328
Esch, John, 337
Esslingen, 20
Esthonia, 340
Eusebius, 133
Eutyches, 136, 184

F

Faber, 12, 241, 280
Fagius, 215
Farel, 351-352
Farnese, Cardinal, 123
Fascism, 201
Ferdinand, King of Hungary and Bohemia, 3-4, 13, 19, 21, 29, 43, 48, 50, 55, 104, 109, 144, 192, 212, 216-218, 341, 343
Ferrara, 344
Flacius, 215, 224-225
Flanders, 338
Fleck, Franciscan, 309
"Formula Missæ," 323
Förster, John, 288
France, 200, 217, 223-224, 336, 350-352
Francis I., 32, 108, 111, 118, 122, 351-352
Franck, Seb., 46-47, 185 f.
Franconia, 81
Frankenhausen, 47
Frankfurt, 20, 24, 31, 110, 125, 349
Frankfurt-on-Oder, 180
Frederick I. of Denmark, 339-340
Frederick, Elector of Saxony, 104
Frederick II., Emperor, 330
Fredewald, Treaty of, 217
Freiberg, 108
Freiburg, 41
Friesland, 49, 56, 338
Frith, John, 353, 357
Froschauer, publisher, 180

G

Galatians, Luther's final Commentary on, 252 f.
Gallus, Nicolas, 215
Garret, 353
Geiler of Kaisersberg, 308
Geneva, 208, 223, 341, 351, 356

George, Duke of Saxony, 12, 31, 104, 151 f., 159, 244, 265
Gerbel, 291
German Mass, Luther's, 81
— Municipalities, Address to, 95
Germany, 1, 3-4, 24, 30, 40, 42, 46, 48, 54, 77, 101, 109, 113, 126, 159, 181, 184, 211, 216, 243, 261, 288, 307, 309, 330 f., 339, 345, 353
Gerson, 242, 308
"Glossa Ordinaria," 275
Gnostics, the, 295
Goethe, 336
Göttingen, 93
Gottschalksen, 340
Gouda, 337
Granvella, 111, 113
Gratian, 133, 135
Grebel, 41
Gregory Nazianzen, 137
Grisar, 144, 278
Groningen, 339
Gropper, 112-113
Grössler, 328
Guelders, 109
Gustenfelden, 185
Güttel, Caspar, 173, 175

H

Hadrian VI., Pope, 131-132, 244
Haetzer, 41, 44, 49, 279
Hagenau, 110, 349
Halberstadt, 153
Hall, 20, 49, 85
Halle, 153-154
Hamilton, Patrick, 224, 357
Handel, 336
Hanover, 31
Hans Worst, 155 f.
Harnack, 299, 302
Hausmann, Nic., 77 f.
Hegel, 336
Heidelberg, 185
Held, Vice-Chancellor, 109
Helding, 214
Hellwys, Thomas, 56
Helmholtz, 336
Henry, Duke of Brunswick, 123, 151, 155 f.
Henry, Duke of Saxony, 31, 109, 271
Henry II., King of France, 216, 352
Henry VIII., 32, 56, 108, 109, 112, 118, 122, 266, 267, 270, 353-355
Hesse, 85, 87, 89
— Landgravine of, 159, 265 f.
— Prince William of, 216-217
Hessus, Eobanus, 105
Hilary, 291
Hippo, 138, 148
Hoen, 338
Hoffmann, Melchior, 48-49, 51
Holland, 49, 56, 338
Honter, John, 343
Horace, 105
Hubmaier, Balt., 5, 42-43, 46 f., 47, 58
Humboldt, 336
Hungary, 3, 223, 343-344
Hus, John, 23, 219, 226, 241, 247, 308, 331
Hussites, 32, 342
Hut, Hans, 46, 47-48
Huter, Jacob, 48
Hutten, Ulrich von, 128, 331, 345
Hymns, Luther's, 323 f.

I

Iceland, 339
Illyria, 344
Ingolstadt, 42-43, 185, 212
Innsbrück, 217
"Institutes," Calvin's, 348
"Instruction, the" (1532), 81
Italy, 159, 223, 344-345

J

James V., King of Scotland, 357
Jena, 70
Jerome, St, 133, 287-288, 291
Jerusalem, Council of, 135
Jews, the, 101, 192 f., 337
Joachim I., Elector of Brandenburg, 19, 206
Joachim II., Elector of Brandenburg, 109, 115, 125, 176, 213-214
John Albert of Mecklenburg, 216
John the Baptist, 60, 227
John, Elector of Saxony, 5-7, 10-11, 14-15, 18, 20-21, 29, 76 f., 162
John Frederick, son of Elector John, 7

John Frederick, Elector of Saxony, 70, 72, 77, 80 f., 107-108, 113-114, 117, 118, 119, 123, 124, 125, 142, 153, 156, 159-160, 173 f., 196, 210 f., 239, 264, 266, 269, 272, 288
Jonas, Justus, 5, 15, 18, 28, 77, 79, 80, 89-90, 169, 175, 207-209, 229, 240, 274, 289, 310, 311
Joris, David, 56
Joseph, father of Jesus, 201
Juda, Leo, 41, 179-180
Jülich-Cleves, Duke of, 109, 118
— Anne of, 109
Julius III., Pope, 215

K

Kadan, Peace of, 31
Kant, Im., 296, 336
Kappel, battle of, 24, 30
Keller, 39-40
Kempten, 31
Kessler, 230
Kiel, 49
Kimchi, Rabbi Moses, 288
Knight George, 229
Knipperdolling, 51 f.
Knox, John, 27, 99, 226, 231, 241, 250, 304-305, 358
Königsberg, University of, 335
— town of, 340
Krauth, Heintz, 70 f.
Krechting, 54
Küstrin, Margrave Hans of, 215-216

L

Laibach, 344
Lambert, Francis, 85-86, 352, 357
Lambert, John, 353
Laski, John, 341
"Last Words of David," 202-203
Latimer, 353
Laufen, battle of, 31
Lauterbach, 87, 234, 307
Lefèbre, Jacques, 244, 347, 350-352
Leipzig, 133, 146, 161, 229, 275, 295-296, 342
— Interim, 215
Lemnius, 154
Leuchtenburg, 70
Leyden, 52, 339
Lichtenberg, 206
Lichtenstein, Lords of, 48
Lindau, 20
Lindsay, John, 357
Lindsay, T. M., 40
Link, Wenc., 17, 57, 84-85, 101, 307
Lithuania, 340
Livonia, 49, 340
Lochau, 84
London, 52
Loofs, 299, 302
Lorraine, 217
Louis II., King of Hungary, 342
Lübeck, 24
Lucca, 344
Lucian, 107
Lucke, 328
Lund, Archbishop of, 110
Lüneburg, 175
Luther, shortsighted opposition to Swiss theologians, 1-3; advises Elector to waive right of free preaching during Diet of Augsburg, 5; his teaching on faith and works, etc., incorporated in the Augsburg Confession, 9; his attitude to the Confession, 10-11; sojourn at Coburg, 11; exhortation to ecclesiastics at Augsburg, 11; his letters to the theologians at Augsburg, 14 f.; Luther and Bucer, 22; his "Warning to his dear Germans," 25 f.; his interview with Vergerio, 32-33; draws up Schmalkald Articles, 33; negotiates with Bucer the Wittenberg Concord, 34; view on adult baptism, 35-36; on the *Volkskirche*, 36-37; earlier attitude to Anabaptists, 57 f.; his work "Concerning Anabaptism," 58 f.; at first protests against their persecution, 63-64; advocates their repression, 64 f.; "Concerning the Sneaks and Hedge-Preachers," 65 f.; criticism of it, 67-69; approves of infliction of death penalty, 69; joins his colleagues in declaration to this effect, whilst leaving room for clemency, 75; views on Church and State, 76-77; leader of evangelical Church in

Luther, Martin—*contd.*
Germany, 77; energetic intervention at Zwickau, 77 f.; Luther and disposal of ecclesiastcal revenues, 80-81; Luther and the question of excommunication, 83 f.; intervention in the controversy at Nürnberg, 84-85; lack of organising ability, 85 f.; attitude towards consistorial courts, 88 f.; Luther on ordination, 92 f.; his ordination Formulary, 94; his preface to Menius's "Christian Economy," 95-96; "Sermon on the Duty of Keeping Children at School," 96 f.; the high utility of an educated ministry, 97-98; necessity of education for the well-being of the State, 98-100; eulogy on the office of schoolmaster, 100-101; value of study of history and of historic instruction, 101-102; appreciation of Fables of Æsop and his German edition of them, 102-103; high appreciation of music, 103-104; values the classics, 104-105; renewal of controversy with Erasmus, 106-107; reform of University education, 107-108; insists on his specific doctrine of justification at Diet of Regensburg, 114; the Emperor invokes his intervention, 115; his response, 115-116; his increasing combativeness, 127; exposes "the Donation of Constantine," 127 f.; comments on Bull of Paul III. and on the Consilium de emendanda Ecclesia, 130-132; his work on "Councils and Churches," 132 f.; its sources, 132-133; its contents, 134 f.; "Against the Papacy at Rome Founded by the Devil," 141 f.; at feud with Duke George of Saxony, 151-153; arraigns the Archbishop of Maintz, 153 f.; "Against Hans Worst," 155 f.; vindication of the Reformed Church and the Reformation as against

Luther, Martin—*contd.*
the papal Church, 156 f.; on the charge of drunkenness against the Elector John Frederick and Landgrave's bigamy, 159-160; Agricola the ardent disciple of Luther, 161; Luther mediates between him and Melanchthon, 162; Luther's teaching on the Law and the Gospel in contrast to that of Agricola, 163-165; he takes action against him, 165-167; Luther's Theses and their teaching, 167-169; reconciliation and renewal of friction, 169-170; why it is necessary to emphasise the preaching of the Law, 171-172; demands an absolute recantation, 173; "Against the Antinomians," 173; irremediable breach between them, and Agricola's appeal to the Elector, 174-175; flight from Wittenberg, 175; Luther and heresy hunting, 176-177; the merits of the controversy, 177-179; Luther's later outbursts against the Zwinglians, 179-180; Caspar von Schwenckfeld and his theological teaching, 180-182; his spiritual view of the Lord's Supper, 182-184; his reverence for Luther, and Luther's contemptuous rejection of his overtures, 184-185; Sebastian Franck and his spiritual radicalism, 185-186; repudiation by Luther, 186; explanation of his antagonism, 187-188; his "Short Confession of the Holy Sacrament" in complete repudiation of the Zwinglians, 188-190; tendency to make himself the exclusive standard of evangelical orthodoxy, 190-191; his early tolerant attitude towards the Jews, 192; his work on "the Jewish Birth of Jesus," 192-195; its temperate tone, 195-196; gradual change to intolerance, 196-197; his tract "Against the Sabbatarians," 197-198;

Luther, Martin—*contd.*
"On the Jews and Their Lies," 198-201; is its fierce anti-Semitism to be taken seriously?, 201-202; "On the Last Words of David," 202-203; retains his implacability to the end, 203-204; recurring ill-health, 205-206; overstrain and weariness of life, 206-208; threatens to leave Wittenberg, 208; journey to Eisleben, 208-209; sudden illness and death, 209-210; foreboding of disaster to Germany, 211-212; defects of Luther and the Reformation in relation to religious liberty, 220 f.; confessionalism and its disadvantages, 222; its prospective scope and efficacy, 222-223; extension of Lutheranism and its limitations, 223-224; Melanchthon's later divergence from Luther, 224-225; Bugenhagen's and Melanchthon's appreciation of Luther, 226 f.; Luther's personal appearance and portraits, 229-230; impressions of contemporaries, 229-231; strongly developed social instinct, 231; his marriage with Catherine von Bora, 231-232; their married life, 233-234; Luther in his home, 234-235; his "Table Talk," 235; Luther and the grossness of the age, 235-237; the simple life, 237; the drinking habit and the charge of drunkenness, 237-239; Luther as a writer, 239-240; his tendency to hyperbole and readiness to confess his failing, 240-241; creative, prophetic type of man, 241-242; Athanasius *contra mundum*, 242-243; fortunate in his age, 243; the reality of his faith, 243-244; Romanist criticism of Luther's reform work, 244-245; mediæval Christianity, 245-246; how Luther challenged and revolutionised it, 246-247; his weaknesses and inconsistencies, 247 f.;

Luther, Martin—*contd.*
his work a mighty impulse forward, 251; Luther as evangelical moralist, 251 f.; problem of salvation both religious and moral, 251-252; his Commentary on Galatians and its mature teaching, 252; the ethical aspect of justification, 253; mystic doctrine of the indwelling Christ, 253-254; repudiates Antinomian version of his teaching, 255; his personal piety, 256; revulsion from the mediæval ecclesiastical type of piety, 256-257; God in nature and human life, 257; robust and yet naïve piety, 257-258; his principle of justification not unethical, 258-259; criticism of M'Giffert, 259; Paul and Luther, 259-260; practical ineffectiveness and its causes, 260-262; its questionable presuppositions, 262-264; application of the Gospel in the economic sphere, 264-265; Luther and the Landgrave's bigamy, 265 f.; explanation of his compromising attitude, 269-270; Luther and "a good, strong lie," 271; regrets his counsel, 272; importance of Bible reading, 273; translation of the Old Testament and its repeated revision, 273-274; his knowledge of original languages, 274-275; adopts a free, not a literal, rendering, 275-276; difficulty and labour of translation, 276-278; question of indebtedness to previous translations, 278-279; appreciations and criticisms, 279-280; its unquestionable merits, 281-282; influence of his personal religious convictions, 282; widespread demand and diffusion, 282-283; the Bible the source of true theology, 283-284; Luther as Professor of Holy Writ, 284-285; manner and method, 285-287; careful preparation of his lectures, 287-

Luther, Martin—*contd.*
289; conscious of his inadequacy, 289; at first employs the allegoric method of exegesis, 289-290; erelong largely discards it, 290; criticism of the Fathers and the doctors, 291-292; seeks the actual historic sense, 292-293; the experimental method, 293; lucidity of Scripture, 294-295; the supreme and sole authority of Scripture against that of the Church, 295-296; the Bible the sovereign medium of salvation, 296-297; Christ its grand theme, 297-298; his unbounded veneration for the Bible, 299; the question of its verbal inspiration, 299-300; the Bible as the Word of God and the Word of God in the Bible, 300; his free criticism of the books of the Old and New Testaments, 300-302; his attitude to rational criticism, 303-304; Luther's early preaching, 304-305; his "Postils," 306-307; Bugenhagen's *locum tenens*, 307; an epoch in the history of preaching, 308; the conventional popular and scholastic preaching, 308-310; the qualifications of the good preacher, 310; the art of simplicity, 310-312; how he prepares and performs, 312-313; exalted sense of his office, 314; sermons embrace civic as well as individual life, 314-316; what to preach, 316; the marvellous power of Luther's preaching, 316-317; failure as well as success, 317-318; catechetical instruction, its importance and necessity, 318-321; Luther makes a new departure, 321-322; subject-matter of this instruction, 322; obligatory on all, 322-323; when Luther began to write hymns, 323-324; evangelical hymnaries, 324; high evaluation of sacred music, 325; borrows and adapts from Psalms

Luther, Martin—*contd.*
and old Latin hymns, 325-326; striking originality, 326-327; distinctive note and didactic purpose, 327; "Ein feste Burg," when written, 327-328; did Luther compose melodies?, 328-329; Luther a national hero, 330; a good German, 330-331; champions the idea of national Church, but fails to realise it, 331-333; the territorial Church and the distinctive German evangelical piety, 333; upholds the dominant political and social system, 333-334; Luther's religious principles nevertheless of far-reaching potential effect, 334-335; Protestantism and progress, 335-336; Luther's influence on modern German Protestant culture, 336-337; Luther's extra-national influence, 337 f.; the Netherlands, 337-339; the Scandinavian lands, 339-340; Poland, 341-342; Bohemia, 342-343; Hungary, 343-344; Southern Slavic lands, 344; Italy, 344-345; the question of Zwingli's indebtedness to Luther, 345-347; Calvin as a disciple of Luther, 347-348; his reply to Sadoleto, 348-349; his veneration for Luther, 350; Luther's influence on France, 350; Lefèbre as Luther's predecessor, 350-351; displaced by Luther, 351-352; French "Lutherans," 352; early influence in England, 353; Tyndale's translation of the New Testament and Luther's, 353; the Ten Articles and other indications, 353-354; attitude of Henry VIII., 354-355; Cranmer's advance under Lutheran influence in the reign of Edward VI., 355; the First Book of Common Prayer and the Forty-Two Articles, 355-356; Luther's influence in Scotland, 356; Patrick Hamilton a disciple of

Luther, Martin—*contd.*
Luther, 357; George Wishart and John Knox, 357-358; Scottish appreciation of Luther, 358; Carlyle on Luther, 358-359; this far-expanding movement the measure of Luther's greatness, 359; enlightened and ill-informed criticism, 359-360
Luther, Hans, son of Reformer, 238
Luther, Martin, son of Reformer, 208-209
Luther, Paul, son of Reformer, 208-209
Lyons, 352
Lyra, Nicolas de, 199, 275, 287, 290-291

M

M'Giffert, Dr, 258-259
Macedonius, 136
Magdalena, Luther's daughter, 207
Magdeburg, 24, 84, 153, 213, 215, 216, 335
Maintz, 52
— Archbishop of, 12, 92, 124, 151, 153 f., 159
Major, Wittenberg theologian, 119
Malvenda, 214
Mansfeld, Count Albrecht of, 7, 161, 175, 203, 208-210
— county of, 179
— town of, 169
Mantua, 109, 131
Manz, 41-42
Marburg Conference, 2, 22, 189, 311
— Confession, 2
— University of, 335, 357
Mary, Governess-General of Netherlands, 338
Mary, mother of Jesus, 201
Mary, Princess of England, 217
Mary, Queen of Hungary, 343
Mary, Queen of Scots, 99
Mary, sister of Charles V., 126
Mathesius, 234, 279
Matthys, Jan, 49, 51 f.
Maurice, Duke of Saxony, 123, 125, 212 f.
— Emperor, 145
Maximilian, son of King Ferdinand, 216
Meaux, 351-352
Mediasch, Synod of, 343
Medler, Nic., 108
Meissen, 81, 123
Melanchthon, 5 f., 28, 32-34, 69 f., 77, 79, 80, 84, 89, 96, 102, 105, 106-107, 111 f., 119, 121, 160, 161 f., 188, 206, 215, 224, 226 f., 230 f., 240, 244, 250, 267 f., 271, 273-274, 277, 283 f., 288, 291, 310-311, 335, 344, 349, 350, 354-355
Melander, 271
Melchiorites, the, 49
Melsungen, 266
Memmingen, 20
Menius, Justus, 64, 95
Mentel, Strassburg printer, 278
Menzel, 336
Merseburg, 92, 124
Metzsch, Hans, 87
Minden, 124
Mirandola, 244
Modena, 344
Mohacs, battle of, 343, 344
Möllenbecke, 54
Mommsen, 336
Moravia, 43, 48, 55, 196-197, 342
Morone, Papal Nuncio, 110, 344
Morton, the Regent, 226
Mosellanus, 229, 275
Moses, 164-165, 170, 178, 268, 284, 297, 300, 307
Mühlberg, battle of, 213, 216
Mühlpfort, Burgomaster of Zwickau, 79
Müller, Caspar, 238
Müller, Jobst, 70 f.
Münster, 47, 49, 50, 51 f., 73, 75, 124
Münster, Sebastian, 288
Münzer, Th., 26, 39, 44, 47, 57, 174, 180, 184, 244, 254, 326
Myconius, 64, 69, 180, 354

N

Naples, 128, 344
Napoleon, 86
Naumburg, 108, 123
Nehemiah, 227

Nérac, 351
Nestorius, 136, 184
Netherlands, the, 48, 49, 52, 55, 111, 124, 126, 212, 217, 223, 323-324, 336 f.
Nicæa, Council of, 135
Nikolsburg, 43, 47, 48
Nordhausen, 24
Nördlingen, 20
Norway, 339-340
Nürnberg, 7, 24, 30-31, 44, 84, 96, 110, 116, 132, 133, 185, 192, 232, 324, 335, 346

O

Occam, William, 242, 250
Ochino, Bernard, 344
Odense, Diet of, 340
Oecolampadius, 8, 43, 46, 183, 188, 224, 350-351
Oedenburg, 343
Oerebro, Synod of, 339
Oldenburg, Christopher of, 213
Oppenheim, 328
Ordinance, the Church (1528), 81; (1533 f.), 81 f., 92
Ordination, 92 f.
Origen, 291
Osiander, 44, 84-85, 312
Osnabrück, 124
Ovid, 105
Oxford, 224

P

Pagnani, 288
Palatine, Elector, 113, 124, 213
Paleario, Aonio, 344-345
Paris, 32, 41, 356
Passau, Treaty of, 217
Paul, St, 61-62, 66, 72, 86, 129, 144, 147, 158, 168, 190, 227-228, 241-242, 251 f., 259-260, 262, 300, 303-305, 308, 317-318
Paul III., Pope, 32, 109, 123, 130 f., 214
Pauli, 328
Pavannes, 351-352
Peasant Rising, 232
Peissker, Hans, 70 f.
Pellican, 180
Pericopes, 306-307
Persia, 101
Peter, St, 147 f., 165, 300, 303
Petersen, Laurence, 339
Petersen, Olave, 339
Pflug, von, 113, 214
Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, 1, 3-4, 6, 8, 13, 16-17, 21, 29, 30-31, 51, 73 f., 104, 112-113, 118, 123, 124, 125, 156, 159-160, 212 f., 239, 265 f.
Philip, son of Charles V., 126, 216, 339
Philip IV. of France, 128
Phocas, the Usurper, 145
Pimpinelli, Cardinal, 5
Pistorius, 113
Platina, 133
Plato, 314
Plautus, 105
Plenus, Dr, 238
Poggio, 102-103
Poland, 223, 341
Pole, Cardinal, 244
Pomerania, 31, 175, 307
Postils, Luther's, 306-307
Prayer Book, the Little, 319
Presburg, 343
Probst, Jacob, 58, 207, 209
Provence, 109
Prussia, East, 340

R

Ranke, Leo von, 17, 336
Rashi, Rabbi, 291
Regensburg (Ratisbon), 42, 110, 111 f., 123, 124, 349
"Regensburg Book," 112, 117
Reichert, 280
Reichskammergericht, the, 21, 24, 30-31, 109-110, 117
Reinhard, Martin, 339
Reservation, the Ecclesiastical, 218
Resistance, right of, 22 f., 47
Reubli, 41, 43, 49
Reuchlin, 192, 275
Reutlingen, 7
Rhau, composer, 104, 324
Riehm, 282
Riga, 340
Ritschl, 39, 336
Rochlitz, Duchess of, 266, 271
Rode, 338
Rörer, George, 93, 234, 274, 307
Rosheim, Joseph, 196

Roth, Stephan, 77-78
Rothenburg, 271
Rothmann, Bernhard, 51 f.
Roussel, 351
Rupff, 104

S

Sabbatarians, the, 197
Sachsenspiegel, 318
Sacramentarians, 244, 249, 337
Sadoleto, 344, 348-349, 350
Sailer, Gereon, 266
Sale, Margaret von der, 266, 271
Salzburg, 50
— Archbishop of, 12
Savonarola, 241, 244, 308
Saxony, 41, 58, 64, 77, 80, 153
Scandinavia, 224
Schaffhausen, 42
Scheel, O., 299, 302
Scherer, 280
"Schem Hamphoras," 201, 204
Schenk, 179
Schiller, 336
Schlaginhausen, 234
Schleiermacher, 336
Schlick, Count, 196, 198
Schmalkalden, 2, 33, 205
— Articles, 33, 162
— League of, 22 f., 109, 118, 153, 212, 219, 270, 272
Schnepf, 31
Schönitz, Anton, 153-154
Schönitz, Hans, 153
Schurf, jurist, 89, 192
Schwabach Articles, 2
— town of, 20
Schwenckfeld, Caspar von, 180 f.
Scotland, 223-224, 240, 336, 356 f.
Scotus, Duns, 309
Seeberg, 296
Seidel, 328
Septuagint, 275
Sicily, 128
Sickingen, Franz von, 125
Sievershausen, 217
Sigismund I., King of Poland, 341
Sigismund II., King of Poland, 341
Silesia, 180-181
Simons, Menno, 56
Smyth, John, 56
Socrates, 189
Solyman, Sultan, 3, 30, 109, 118, 122
Soranus, 77-78
Sorbonne, the, 224, 351-352
Soto, 214
Spain, 216, 223, 244, 351
Spalatin, 5, 15, 28, 231, 323
Spengler, Laz., 17, 96
Speratus, 340
Spires, Diet of (1529), 1, 7, 20, 21, 50, 162, 328; (1544), 118, 122, 142
Spirituals, the, 249
Spitta, 323, 328
St Andrews, 357
St Gall, 42
Stafford, 353
Staupitz, 288, 305
Steinhöwel, 102
Steyn, 337
Strassburg, 2, 7, 20, 24, 46, 49, 266, 278, 341, 351, 357
Sturm, Jacob, 2
Styria, 46, 344
Suabia, 48
"Summaries" of Agricola, 165-166
Sutel, 93
Swan, Provost of Kirkcaldy, 358
Sweden, 49, 118, 339
Switzerland, 40, 42, 46, 345
"Symphoniæ Jucundæ," 324

T

"Table Talk," 91-92, 107, 235-236, 239, 275, 317, 328
Taborites, 40
Tamerlane, 129
Tauler, 242, 308
Tausen, Hans, 340
Thann, Eber. von der, 64-65, 67, 271
Thola, 196
Thuringia, 41, 81
Torgau, 7, 79, 162, 166
Tour, M. de la, 356
Toussain, 351
Transylvania, 343-344
Trent, Council of, 123, 142, 145, 150, 214-215, 246
Trevelyan, Professor, 356
Treves, Archbishop of, 124
Troeltsch, 335
Trott, Eva von, 160
Truber, 344

Tübingen, University of, 335
Turks, the, 3, 29, 95, 111, 117, 122, 130, 211
Tyndale, W., 353, 357
Tyrol, 48, 55, 212

U

Ulm, 2, 20, 24
Ulrich, Duke of Würtemberg, 30, 213
United States, the, 57, 336
Utraquists, the, 342

V

Valdés, Juan, 344
Valdez, secretary of Charles V., 5
Valla, Laurentius, 128, 242
Vambéry, Professor, 343
Vasa, Gustavus, 339
Vatable, 351
Vedder, 40
Veltwyk, Imperial Councillor, 112
Venice, Doge of, 23, 41, 344
Vergerio, Papal Nuncio, 32, 230 345
Vermigli, Peter Martyr, 344
Vesterås, Diet of, 339
Vienna, 3, 43
Villach, 217
Virgil, 105
Visitation of 1533, 81
Voes, Henry, 337
Voigtland, 81
Vulgate, 275, 278-280

W

Waldeck, Franz von, 124
Waldensians, 40, 321
Waldshut, 42-43
Walther, modern writer on Luther, 278, 280
Walther, musician, 104
War, Thirty Years', 219
Warham, Archbishop, 353
Wartburg, the, 11, 64, 219, 229, 273-274, 306, 337, 358
Weimar, 81, 235, 244, 271
Wellhausen, 336
Weller, Jerome, 108, 234
Werner, 336
Wessel Gansfort, 337
Widemann, 48
Wied, Hermann von, 112, 124, 188, 355
Winkler, Lutheran pastor, 153
Wishart, George, 224, 357-358
Wittenberg Concord, 34, 179
— Consistory, 90-91, 173
— Constitution, 81-82
— Town Council of, 84, 208
— University of, 107, 148, 161-162, 166, 174, 223, 229, 310, 337, 339, 341, 351-352, 356
"Wittenberg Reformation," 119 f.
Witzel, 107
Wolmar, Mel., 352
Wolsey, Cardinal, 224
Worms, 46, 110, 111, 112, 123, 230, 331, 332, 337-338, 349
— Edict of, 21, 328
Würtemberg, 31, 215
Wyclif, 31, 241, 247, 304, 308, 331
Wyttenbach, Th. von, 346

X

Ximenes, Cardinal, 241, 244

Z

Zapolya, John, 343
Zeitz, 90, 208
Ziegler, Bernhard, 288
Zulsdorf, 208
Zürich, 30, 41 f., 179-180, 188, 341, 345, 351-352, 357
Zutphen, 109
Zweibrücken, Wolfgang of, 215
Zwickau, 41, 77-79, 84
Zwingli, 1, 2, 5, 8, 20, 22, 34, 35, 40 f., 179-180, 183, 184, 188 f., 223-224, 284, 311, 338, 345-347, 350
Zwinglians, the, 1, 6, 7, 8, 16, 20, 85, 179-180

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